5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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Then Wolf Tail went out and looked for his brother, and 539
when he had found him, he said: "Come, let us get some feathers. I know where there is an eagle's nest;" and he took him to a high cliff, which overhung the river, and on the edge of this cliff was a dead tree, in the top of which the eagles had built their nest. Then said Wolf Tail, "Climb up, brother, and kill the eagles;" and when Bull Turns Round had climbed nearly to the top, Wolf Tail called out, "I am going to push the tree over the cliff, and you will be killed."

"Oh, brother! oh, brother! pity me; do not kill me," said Bull Turns Round.

"Why did you beat my wife's face so?" said Wolf Tail.

"I didn't," cried the boy; "I don't know what you are talking about."

"You lie," said Wolf Tail, and he pushed the tree over the cliff. He looked over and saw his brother fall into the water, and he did not come up again. Then Wolf Tail went home and took down his lodge, and went to the main camp. When his father saw him coming with only his wives, he said to him, "Where is your young brother?" And Wolf Tail replied: "He went hunting and did not come back. We waited four days for him. I think the bears must have killed him."

II

Now when Bull Turns Round fell into the river, he was stunned, and the water carried him a long way down the stream and finally lodged him on a sand shoal. Near this [776] shoal was a lodge of Under Water People (*Sŭ'-yĕ-tŭp'-pi*), an old man, his wife, and two daughters. This old man was very rich: he had great flocks of geese, swans, ducks, and other water-fowl, and a big herd of buffalo which were tame. These buffalo always fed near by, and the old man called them every evening to come and drink. But he and his

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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mothers, where are there any more people? I want to travel around and see them." The old women said: "The nearest ones are at the point of rocks (on Sun River). There is a pis'kun there." So Kŭt-o′-yis travelled off toward this place, and when he reached the camp, he entered an old woman's lodge. 539

The old woman set before him a plate of bad food. "How is this?" he asked. "Have you nothing better than this to set before a stranger? You have a pis'kun down there, and must get plenty of fat meat. Give me some pemmican." "We cannot do that," the old woman replied, "because there is a big snake here, who is chief of the camp. He not only takes the best pieces, but often he eats a handsome young woman, when he sees one." When Kŭt-o′-yis heard this he was angry, and went over and entered the snake's lodge. The women were cooking up some sarvis berries. He picked up the dish, and ate the berries, and threw the dish out of the door. Then he went over to where the snake was lying asleep, pricked him with his knife, and said: "Here, get up. I have come to see you." This made the snake angry. He partly raised himself up and began to rattle, when Kŭt-o′-yis cut him into pieces with his knife. Then he turned around and killed all his wives and children, except one little female snake, which escaped by crawling into a crack in the rocks. "Oh, well," said Kŭt-o′-yis, "you can go and breed young snakes, so there will be more. The people will not be afraid of little snakes." Kŭt-o′-yis said to the old woman, "Now you go into this snake's lodge and take it for yourself, and everything that is in it."

Then he asked them where there were some more people. They told him that there were some people down the river, and some up in the mountains. But they said: "Do not go there, for it is bad, because Ai-sin′-o-ko-ki (Wind Sucker) lives there. He will kill you." It pleased Kŭt-o′-yis to [776]

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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787 was deemed essential that the place to which a man re-
785 sorted for this purpose should be unfrequented, where few
or no persons had walked; and it must also be a place that
●[776] tried the nerve, where there was some danger. Such situa-
tions were mountain peaks; or narrow ledges on cut cliffs,
where a careless movement might cause a man to fall to his
death on the rocks below; or islands in lakes, which could
only be reached by means of a raft, and where there was
danger that a person might be seized and carried off by the
Sū'-yē tŭp'-pi, or Under Water People; or places where the
dead had been buried, and where there was much danger
from ghosts. Or a man might lie in a well-worn buffalo trail,
where the animals were frequently passing, and so he might
be trodden on by a travelling band of buffalo; or he might
choose a locality where bears were abundant and dangerous.
[342] Wherever he went, the man built himself a little lodge of
brush, moss, and leaves, to keep off the rain; and, after
making his prayers to the sun and singing his sacred songs,
he crept into the hut and began his fast. He was not al-
lowed to take any covering with him, nor to roof over his
[276] shelter with skins. He always had with him a pipe, and
this lay by him, filled, so that, when the spirit, or dream, came,
[776] it could smoke. They did not appeal to any special class
of helpers, but prayed to all alike. Often by the end of the
fourth day, a secret helper—usually, but by no means always,
in the form of some animal—appeared to the man in a dream,
and talked with him, advising him, marking out his course
through life, and giving him its power. There were some,
however, on whom the power would not work, and a much
greater number who gave up the fast, discouraged, before the
prescribed time had been completed, either not being able
to endure the lack of food and water, or being frightened
by the strangeness or loneliness of their surroundings, or by
something that they thought they saw or heard. It was no
disgrace to fail, nor was the failure necessarily known, for

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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RELIGION

776 In ancient times the chief god of the Blackfeet—their Creator—was *Na'pi* (Old Man). This is the word used to indicate any old man, though its meaning is often loosely given as white. An analysis of the word *Na'pi*, however, shows it to be compounded of the word *Ni'nah*, man, and the particle *a'pi*, which expresses a color, and which is never used by itself, but always in combination with some other word. The Blackfoot word for white is *Ksik-si-num'*, while *a'pi*, though also conveying the idea of whiteness, really describes the tint seen in the early morning light when it first appears in the east—the dawn—not a pure white, but that color combined with a faint cast of yellow. *Na'pi*, therefore, would seem to mean dawn-light-color-man, or man-yellowish-white. It is easy to see why old men should be called by this latter name, for it describes precisely the color of their hair.

Dr. Brinton, in his valuable work, American Hero Myths, has suggested a more profound reason why such a name should be given to the Creator. He says: "The most important of all things to life is light. This the primitive savage felt, and personifying it, he made light his chief god. The beginning of day served, by analogy, for the beginning of the world. Light comes before the Sun, brings it forth, creates it, as it were. Hence the Light god is not the Sun god but his antecedent and Creator."

It would be absurd to attribute to the Blackfoot of to-day any such abstract conception of the name of the Creator as

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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that expressed in the foregoing quotation. The statement that Old Man was merely light personified would be beyond his comprehension, and if he did understand what was meant, he would laugh at it, and aver that *Na'pi* was a real man, a flesh and blood person like himself. 776

The character of Old Man, as depicted in the stories told of him by the Blackfeet, is a curious mixture of opposite attributes. In the serious tales, such as those of the creation, he is spoken of respectfully, and there is no hint of the impish qualities which characterize him in other stories, in which he is powerful, but also at times impotent; full of all wisdom, yet at times so helpless that he has to ask aid from the animals. Sometimes he sympathizes with the people, and at others, out of pure spitefulness, he plays them malicious tricks that are worthy of a demon. He is a combination of strength, weakness, wisdom, folly, childishness, and malice. 776 538

Under various names Old Man is known to the Crees, Chippeways, and other Algonquins, and many of the stories that are current among the Blackfeet are told of him among those tribes. The more southern of these tribes do not venerate him as of old, but the Plains and Timber Crees of the north, and the north Chippeways, are said still to be firm believers in Old Man. He was their Creator, and is still their chief god. He is believed in less by the younger generation than the older. The Crees are regarded by the Indians of the Northwest as having very powerful medicine, and this all comes from Old Man. 776 171

Old Man can never die. Long ago he left the Blackfeet and went away to the West, disappearing in the mountains. Before his departure he told them that he would always take care of them, and some day would return. Even now, many of the old people believe that he spoke the truth, and that some day he will come back, and will bring with him the buffalo, which they believe the white men have 776 [825]

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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776 [825] hidden. It is sometimes said, however, that when he left them he told them also that, when he returned, he would find them changed — a different people and living in a different way from that which they practised when he went away. Sometimes, also, it is said that when he disappeared he went to the East.

776 178 It is generally believed that Old Man is no longer the principal god of the Blackfeet, that the Sun has taken his place. There is some reason to suspect, however, that the Sun and Old Man are one, that *Nāfōs'* is only another name for *Na'pi*, for I have been told by two or three old men that "the Sun is the person whom we call Old Man." However this may be, it is certain that *Na'pi* — even if he no longer occupies the chief place in the Blackfoot religious system — is still reverenced, and is still addressed in prayer. Now, however, every good thing, success in war, in the chase, health, long life, all happiness, come by the special favor of the Sun.

776 821 The Sun is a man, the supreme chief of the world. The flat, circular earth in fact is his home, the floor of his lodge, and the over-arching sky is its covering. The moon, *Kō-kō-mik'-ē-ĭs*, night light, is the Sun's wife. The pair have had a number of children, all but one of whom were killed by pelicans. The survivor is the morning star, *A-pi-su'-ahts* — early riser.

776 782 In attributes the Sun is very unlike Old Man. He is a beneficent person, of great wisdom and kindness, good to those who do right. As a special means of obtaining his favor, sacrifices must be made. These are often presents of clothing, fine robes, or furs, and in extreme cases, when the prayer is for life itself, the offering of a finger, or — still dearer — a lock of hair. If a white buffalo was killed, the [778] robe was always given to the Sun. It belonged to him. Of the buffalo, the tongue — regarded as the greatest delicacy of the whole animal — was especially sacred to the Sun.

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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The sufferings undergone by men in the Medicine Lodge each year were sacrifices to the Sun. This torture was an actual penance, like the sitting for years on top of a pillar, the wearing of a hair shirt, or fasting in Lent. It was undergone for no other purpose than that of pleasing God—as a propitiation or in fulfilment of vows made to him. Just as the priests of Baal slashed themselves with knives to induce their god to help them, so, and for the same reason, the Blackfoot men surged on and tore out the ropes tied to their skins. It is merely the carrying out of a religious idea that is as old as history and as widespread as the globe, and is closely akin to the motive which to-day, in our own centres of enlightened civilization, prompts acts of self-denial and penance by many thousands of intelligent cultivated people. And yet we are horrified at hearing described the tortures of the Medicine Lodge.

Besides the Sun and Old Man, the Blackfoot religious system includes a number of minor deities or rather natural qualities and forces, which are personified and given shape. These are included in the general terms Above Persons, Ground Persons, and Under Water Persons. Of the former class, Thunder is one of the most important, and is worshipped as is elsewhere shown. He brings the rain. He is represented sometimes as a bird, or, more vaguely, as in one of the stories, merely as a fearful person. Wind Maker is an example of an Under Water Person, and it is related that he has been seen, and his form is described. It is believed by some that he lives under the water at the head of the Upper St. Mary's Lake. Those who believe this say that when he wants the wind to blow, he makes the waves roll, and that these cause the wind to blow,—another example of mistaking effect for cause, so common among the Indians. The Ground Man is another below person. He lives under the ground, and perhaps typifies the power of the earth, which is highly respected by all Indians of the west. The

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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776 [171] The Cheyennes also have a Ground Man whom they call The Lower One, or Below Person (*Pun'-ŏ-tsĭ-hyo*). The cold and snow are brought by Cold Maker (*Aĭ'-so-yim-stan*). He is a man, white in color, with white hair, and clad in white apparel, who rides on a white horse. He brings the storm with him. They pray to him to bring, or not to bring, the storm.

825 778 Many of the animals are regarded as typifying some form of wisdom or craft. They are not gods, yet they have power, which, perhaps, is given them by the Sun or by Old Man. Examples of this are shown in some of the stories.

Among the animals especially respected and supposed to have great power, are the buffalo, the bear, the raven, the wolf, the beaver, and the kit-fox. Geese too, are credited with great wisdom and with foreknowledge of the weather. They are led by chiefs. As is quite natural among a people like the Blackfeet, the buffalo stood very high among the animals which they reverenced. It symbolized [776] food and shelter, and was *Nato'yĕ* (of the Sun), sacred. Not a few considered it a medicine animal, and had it for their dream, or secret helper. It was the most powerful of all the animal helpers. Its importance is indicated by the fact that buffalo skulls were placed on the sweat houses built in connection with the Medicine Lodge. A similar respect for the buffalo exists among many Plains tribes, which were formerly dependent on it for food and raiment. A reverence for the bear appears to be common to all North American tribes, and is based not upon anything that the animal's body yields, but perhaps on the fact that it is the largest carnivorous mammal of the continent, the most difficult to kill and extremely keen in all its senses. The Blackfeet believe it to be part brute and part human, portions of its body, particularly the ribs and feet, being like those of a man. The raven is cunning. The wolf has great endurance and much craft. He can steal close to one without being seen. In the stories

825 778 The bear has very powerful medicine. Sometimes he takes pity on people and helps them, as in the story of Mik'-api.

821 789 [533] Some Piegans, if they wish to travel on a certain day, have the power of insuring good weather on that day. It is supposed that they do this by singing a powerful song. Some of the enemy can cause bad weather, when they want to steal into the camp.

People who belonged to the *Sin'-o-pah* band of the *I-kun-uh'-kah-tsi*, if they were at war in summer and wanted a storm to come up, would take some dirt and water and rub it on the kit-fox skin, and this would cause a rain-storm to come up. In winter, snow and dirt would be rubbed on the skin and this would bring up a snow-storm.

778 782 Certain places and inanimate objects are also greatly reverenced by the Blackfeet, and presents are made to them.

823 [115] [776] The smallest of the three buttes of the Sweet Grass Hills is regarded as sacred. "All the Indians are afraid to go there," Four Bears once told me. Presents are sometimes thrown into the Missouri River, though these are not offerings made directly to the stream, but are given to the Under Water People, who live in it.

Mention has already been made of the buffalo rock, which gives its owner the power to call the buffalo.

Another sacred object is the medicine rock of the Marias. It is a huge boulder of reddish sandstone, two-thirds the way up a steep hill on the north bank of the Marias River, about five miles from Fort Conrad. Formerly, this rock rested on the top of the bluff, but, as the soil about it is worn away by the wind and the rain, it is slowly moving down the hill. The Indians believe it to be alive, and make presents to it. When I first visited it, the ground about it was strewn with decaying remnants of offerings that had been made to it in the past. Among these I noticed, besides fragments of clothing, eagle feathers, a steel finger

A. [See Category 116, pp. 61-69--Analyst]
4

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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ring, brass ear-rings, and a little bottle made of two copper cartridge cases. 778

Down on Milk River, east of the Sweet Grass Hills, is another medicine rock. It is shaped something like a man's body, and looks like a person sitting on top of the bluff. Whenever the Blackfeet pass this rock, they make presents to it. Sometimes, when they give it an article of clothing, they put it on the rock, "and then," as one of them once said to me, "when you look at it, it seems more than ever like a person." Down in the big bend of the Milk River, opposite the eastern end of the Little Rocky Mountains, lying on the prairie, is a great gray boulder, which is shaped like a buffalo bull lying down. This is greatly reverenced by all Plains Indians, Blackfeet included, and they make presents to it. Many other examples of similar character might be given. 782 823 [171]

The Blackfeet make daily prayers to the Sun and to Old Man, and nothing of importance is undertaken without asking for divine assistance. They are firm believers in dreams. These, they say, are sent by the Sun to enable us to look ahead, to tell what is going to happen. A dream, especially if it is a strong one, — that is, if the dream is very clear and vivid, — is almost always obeyed. As dreams start them on the war path, so, if a dream threatening bad luck comes to a member of a war party, even if in the enemy's country and just about to make an attack on a camp, the party is likely to turn about and go home without making any hostile demonstrations. The animal or object which appears to the boy, or man, who is trying to dream for power, is, as has been said, regarded thereafter as his secret helper, his medicine, and is usually called his dream (*Nits-ó'-kan*). 776 782 787 [721] [776]

The most important religious occasion of the year is the ceremony of the Medicine Lodge. This is a sacrifice, which, among the Blackfeet, is offered invariably by women. If a 796 [562] [782]

5: Grinnell Q,T-5 (ca.1888) 1962
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about noon, and left the next morning, having received for his services a saddle and two blankets."

"Listen, my dream—" This is the key to most of the Blackfoot medicine practices. These doctors for the most part effect their cures by prayer. Each one has his dream, or secret helper, to whom he prays for aid, and it is by this help that he expects to restore his patient to health. No doubt the doctors have the fullest confidence that their practices are beneficial, and in some cases they undoubtedly do good because of the implicit confidence felt in them by the patient.

Often, when a person is sick, he will ask some medicine man to unroll his pipe. If able to dance, he will take part in the ceremony, but if not, the medicine man paints him with the sacred symbols. In any case a fervent prayer is offered by the medicine man for the sick person's recovery. The medicine man administers no remedies; the ceremony is purely religious. Being a priest of the Sun, it is thought that god will be more likely to listen to him than he would to an ordinary man.

Although the majority of Blackfoot doctors are men, there are also many women in the guild, and some of them are quite noted for their success. Such a woman, named Wood Chief Woman, is now alive on the Blackfoot reservation. She has effected many wonderful cures. Two Bear Woman is a good doctor, and there are many others.

In the case of gunshot wounds a man's "dream," or "medicine," often acts directly and speedily. Many cases are cited in which this charm, often the stuffed skin of some bird or animal, belonging to the wounded man, becomes alive, and by its power effects a cure. Many examples of this might be given but for lack of space. Entirely honest Indians and white men have seen such cures and believe in them.

6: McFee E-4,5 (1959-1967) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

In the more serious cases of adult disputes, force and physical punishment were employed if gossip failed. In cases of murder, a revenge killing might take place if a high payment was not offered in retribution and accepted. A person who disrupted the summer hunt might be beaten and have his clothing and weapons destroyed. An adulterous woman might have her nose cut off, or be put to death by the members of her husband's warrior society (Grinnell 1907:220, Ewers 1958:97–98; Wissler 1911:24–26 discuss specific punishments).

These forces contributed to the development of some general personality characteristics of the Blackfeet. Grinnell found them, like other Plains Indians, to be "talkative, merry, and lighthearted," and fond of joking, even though they appeared reserved and quiet when with strangers (Grinnell 1907:181). Wissler commented on their fondness for jest and practical jokes (Wissler 1911:52–53). In addition, I get a picture of a brave, resourceful people, industrious and aggressive, yet much concerned with self, jealous, and easily shamed. These characteristics and their expression were further reinforced by the Blackfeet beliefs.

Religion

While learning all these skills and rules, the young people were learning as well the beliefs that gave the practices validity, supported the rights and privileges of age, gave meaning to the Blackfeet world, and added supernatural reinforcement to the moral code.

All of the Blackfeet universe was invested with a pervasive supernatural power that could be met with in the natural environment. A man could seek and avail himself of this power through proper behavior and ritual. He went alone to a remote place to fast and pray, and to await the dream or vision that would transfer power to him. If he was successful the supernatural appeared to him, usually in animate form, and promised aid and success in all or specific endeavors, if the man in return would observe faithfully a series of taboos and periodically re-enact in ritual the experience by which he had received the power. The spirit-being instructed the petitioner to make a medicine bundle containing the symbols of his power and taught him the appropriate songs and rituals. The spirit was now his guardian and could be called upon for protection in times of trouble.

The powers, paraphernalia, and rituals became the personal property of the owner. He and the spirit dealt with each other as individuals, and any group benefits to be expected from this relationship were dependent on the inclinations of the individual owner. The complete power, bundle, songs, and ritual could be sold, or transferred, by one individual to another for a price. The owners of some bundles could sell short-term benefits of their power, as well, usually by going through the ceremony of the bundle for the benefit of an individual, the family, band, or tribe, or through the preparation of a charm to be used by the purchaser. Ewers relates how Wolf Calf acquired horse medicine power and how he used it, how he transferred parts of the power and how these parts and the bundle itself were transferred to a series of men from those days in the early nineteenth century on up into the time of Ewer's informants of the 1940s (Ewers 1955:258–261). The

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Old Man said, "Let the people have eyes and mouths in their faces, and let them be straight up and down." But Old Woman added, "Yes, let them have eyes and mouths; but they shall be set crosswise in their faces."

Old Man said, "Let the people have ten fingers on each hand." "No," declared Old Woman, "ten fingers are too many. They will be in the way. Let them have four fingers and a thumb on each hand." So the people were made.

But Old Man and Old Woman could not agree on one important point. Should the people live forever, or should they die? Finally Old Man said, "I will throw a buffalo chip into the water. If it floats, the people will die for four days and live again; but, if it sinks, they will die forever." He threw the buffalo chip into the water, and it floated. "No," said Old Woman, "I will throw this rock. If it floats, the people will die for four days. If it sinks, they will die forever." She threw the rock into the water, and it sank to the bottom. Then they agreed that it was better that way. If people lived forever they would never feel sorry for one another.

At first the people were hungry and cold. Then Old Man showed them how to collect edible roots and berries, how to make wooden bows and stone-headed arrows, how to use weapons, traps, and deadfalls to kill buffalo and the smaller animals for food, and how to dress animal skins for warm clothing.

His work of creation completed, Old Man climbed a high mountain and disappeared.[1]

Some say that Napi's home was in the mountains at the head of the stream that still bears his name, Oldman River, in the province of Alberta. Blackfoot Indians can still point out Old Man's gambling place west of Fort Macleod, where Napi played the hoop-and-pole game long, long ago. However, the fact that Old Man, the creator, also appears in the mythology of the Arapaho, Gros Ventre, and Cree tribes suggests that he may have been

[1] Alexander Henry and David Thompson, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest*, II, 528. Many versions of this story have been recorded since Henry first mentioned the Old Man legend in his journal in 1810.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

THE BLACKFEET [ca. 1800]

War was the principal occupation of the young men. The Piegans, who continued to be the frontier tribe—living farther south and west than the others—were the most active aggressors in the successful wars against the Shoshonis. The Blackfeet, living farthest northeast, bore the brunt of Cree and Assiniboin pressures from the east. The Blood tribe in the center warred in both directions. Many older men among the Blackfoot tribes bragged of killing fifteen or twenty of the enemy. He was but a modest warrior who could claim less than ten scalps. The successful ones delighted in recounting their battle records.

In their wars with the Shoshonis and Flatheads, the Piegans sent out large parties of several hundred men to do battle. However, much of their warlike activity took the form of raiding for horses by small groups of young men. By raiding and raising horses some Indians managed to build up large herds. In 1809 one Piegan was said to own three hundred, while some Northern Blackfeet owned thirty or forty horses. Two kinds of saddles were used, a buffalo-hide pad stuffed with moose or elk hair, employed by active young men, and a rawhide-covered, wooden-framed saddle with high pommel and cantle, ridden by women.[44]

The traders' accounts of Indian religious beliefs are of less value than their observations of everyday life and customs. They depended to a great extent on the Cree language in their conversations with the Blackfeet. They saw little of the Indians during the summer months when furs were not prime and the natives were hunting far from the trading posts. That was also the traditional ceremonial season. Although Henry learned that the Blackfeet then recognized the sun as their supreme being, he did not mention the tribal sun dance. If that important religious observance of later years was performed at that time it would have been held in the summer far away from the trading posts.

Traders were intrigued by the painstaking attention given by the Blackfoot tribes to ceremonial smoking. Yet the medicine

[44] Henry and Thompson, *New Light*, II, 526-27, 726-27.

8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Maximilian and Bodmer spent more than a month at Fort McKenzie, in the heart of the Blackfoot country. During this period (August 9–September 14, 1833) all three Blackfoot tribes came in to trade. While Bodmer was busy making excellent water color portraits of many of the most influential chiefs and drawing a panoramic view of the great camp of the Piegans, the Prince recorded his observations of Blackfoot customs and of the conduct of the trade at Fort McKenzie.

Mitchell was making definite progress wooing the Blackfoot trade away from the Hudson's Bay Company. At the conclusion of a feast given by the Northern Blackfoot chief Iron Shirt, that leader gave Mitchell the scarlet uniform with blue facings and yellow lace which he had received from the "Northern White Men." Later Mitchell gave the Piegan leader, Bear Chief, a handsome uniform, a red felt hat ornamented with feathers, and a new double-barreled percussion gun, to let the other chiefs see "how the American Fur Company distinguished its faithful friends."

Prince Maximilian was the first white observer to describe the Blackfoot men's societies. He named seven of these fraternities and noted that they were age-graded. That is, young men purchased membership in the Mosquito Society and gradually progressed through the other societies to the Bull Society of elderly men. Each society had its peculiar regalia, songs, and dances. All societies except the Mosquitos and Bulls assumed responsibilities for keeping order in the camp. He also witnessed and briefly described the dramatic reinactment of the driving of buffalo into a pound by the colorfully garbed members of the Women's Society.

Maximilian was disappointed in the information he obtained about Blackfoot religion, explaining, "Mr. Berger the interpreter, who was otherwise well acquainted with the Blackfoot Indians, could not give me any information respecting their religious ideas, further than that they worship the sun."[27]

[26] Maximilian, *Travels*, II, 46, 71–76.
[27] *Ibid.*, 112–17, 122.

22: Wissler & Duvall E,I-5 (1902-1907) 1908
NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Napiw[a], also entirely human. This is certainly in contrast to many of the surrounding tribes in whose mythologies similar antics are attributed to a rabbit, coyote, or spider-like person. Thus we have another of those frequent suggestions that the Algonkin tribes of the Plains themselves constitute a sub-group.

It is unfortunate that so little Cree mythology has been recorded, as the few narratives published by Russell[1] suggest the closest relation to those of the Blackfoot so far encountered. Similarities to Fox and Ojibwa myths seem much more numerous among the Blackfoot than among the Arapaho, Gros Ventre, or Cheyenne. Thus, the wide distribution of these characteristics among the various Algonkin speaking tribes of the Missouri-Saskatchewan area, seems to favor the view that the Old Man myths represent the older basic beliefs of the Blackfoot. In this connection the failure to find in the present mythological beliefs evidence of the identity of the Old Man and the Sun, justifies the assumption that the secondary character of the former is due to the intrusion of the latter.

According to the testimony of many writers, the Blackfoot Indians took great interest in the heavens, and possessed considerable astronomical knowledge. However that may be, this collection contains an unusual number of Star Myths. We have considered them as such because the chief characters either appear as heavenly bodies (though sometimes in disguise), or become such at the end of their earthly careers. In many cases this transformation forms no essential part of the narrative, being a mere incident, or as it were an afterthought by the narrator. This is especially noticeable in the Twin-Stars, or Brothers, where we find an elaborate myth composed primarily of the widely distributed Found-in-the-Grass. The same may be said of Blood-Clot or Smoking-Star. On the other hand, we find the Morning-Star as an important character in a number of myths, where he appears as the son of the Sun and Moon. In Blackfoot religion these three are in many respects a sacred trio to whom prayers are addressed individually and collectively. Again, in the Morning-Star myths we find the well-known incident of a woman marrying a star, in this case the Morning-Star himself, whose son by this union becomes the Fixed-Star. Taking the entire eight *Star* Myths as a whole, but three appear to be original with the Blackfoot, — Cuts-Wood, Scar-Face, and the Bunched-Stars.

A large number of myths function as ritualistic origins, the rituals themselves being in part dramatic interpretations of the narratives. Yet, while the rituals are fixed and rigidly adhered to, the myths show the same wide variations in detail as those of other groups. This is contrary to expectation.

[1] Frank Russell, Explorations in the Far North, 1898, pp. 201–220.

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others were busy with that, I, with willow pole and line, hook baited with grasshoppers, hurried to the river and was soon yanking from a deep pool my first Montana trout, a beauty of a pound or more; these were trout so different from those trout of the Adirondacks of New York, in which I had spent many a vacation. I deeply regretted that I had not brought west my light fly rod, reel, and book of flies, for bait fishing was not sport to me. I caught, cleaned, and fried crisply brown two panfuls of trout, and then, to my surprise, Kipp alone joined me in eating of them. It was, I learned, that the Blackfoot tribes believed fish to be the property of the dread *Suyi Tupi* (Water People), monsters of human form who inhabit the rivers and lakes and at every opportunity seize unwary swimmers and draw them down to their underwater homes, there to kill them.

Early on the following morning, we began cutting and hauling logs for our post, building it in the large cottonwood grove in the forks of the river and the creek. We completed the work early in October. One cabin, sixteen by forty feet, was our trade room and storehouse; the other cabin of three rooms was our kitchen, occupied by Crow Woman and daughter, and by Pearson and wife; Kipp and I had the third room. Our teamsters, when present, slept in the warehouse. Rude our post but sufficient for our needs.

The Pikunis and a few lodges of the Bloods arrived soon after we completed the post, and came, too, one who was to become and always remain a close friend of mine, Eli Guardipee, named by the Pikunis *Isinamakan*, "Takes Gun Ahead." He was of that family for which so many places in the north are named, as, for instance, the Guardipee Crossing of Bow River. His keen-witted, handsome mother was a Shoshoni woman. He was but a year older than I; tall, slender, very intelligent, kind of heart, brave to a fault; and the most successful hunter, the surest shot that I have ever known.

The fur of the buffalo did not become prime until November so we would not be getting any tanned robes over our counter until December. But with the arrival of the Pikunis we began buying from them daily a hundred and more hides of deer, elk, and antelope, so plentiful were they upon the near plains and mountains. We gave one dollar's worth of merchandise for a hide. We had no scales, no

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136 773 long-ago that bad god, Red Old Man, herded all of the buffalo up into the mountains and hid them in a great cave, so that all the people of the earth would starve, would die. But that good god, White Old Man, found them; turned them back out onto the plains. So is it that our enemies, the white man, have now hidden the buffalo, so to kill us off, starve us to death. But Sun pities us. Sun is powerful. He will help us to find them."

● [776] That soon came to be the belief of all three Blackfoot tribes. For some years after the buffalo were exterminated, the medicine men kept fervently praying Sun to help them find and free the hidden herds.

000 We parted from our friends early in the morning; my last words to them were that, with the coming of the fireboats, Raven Quiver and I would return to our Bear River home, there to remain, for there would be no trading for buffalo robes.

A little way below the mouth of Cow Creek, we saw a lone buffalo calf, almost a yearling, standing in the timber, and I shot it. Its fur was so very dark, beaver-fur-like in texture, that I had Hudson help carefully to remove the hide, nubby horns, hooves, and all. It proved to be the very last buffalo that I killed. Months later good Crow Woman carefully tanned it, and still later I presented it to the Smithsonian Institution.

The fifty blankets that we brought down from the Judith did not last three days; trade was good. We were getting many robes from both the Crees and Red Rivers, and from the latter, also, much dried meat and pemmican. As Kipp well said, not for nothing was this, our last winter of trade.

In August, looking for work, there had come to us from the railend on the Yellowstone, on foot and sore from having sat down in a bed of prickly pears, a young man, a giant of a man, who in my youthful days had been my guide in the Adirondack Mountains of New York. Although not needed, Kipp had made him our helper in trade room and warehouse, and the Indians, because of his great size and vigor, had promptly named him *Manksi Stumik*, "Young Bull." Well, Young Bull was a great ladies' man, and in due time

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way to help their own hungry ones. I answered that I would do all that I possibly could for them.

I had long been a contributor to *Forest and Stream*, best of all outdoor magazines, published in New York, and so had had much correspondence with its owner and editor, George Bird Grinnell. So now, upon arriving home at Fort Conrad, I wrote him about the destitution of the Pikunis and asked what could be done to help them. In due time I received a wire from him, forwarded by mail from Fort Benton, advising that I go up to the reservation at once, make a thorough investigation of the conditions, and send him a full report on it. Twenty-four hours after getting the message, I rode into a camp of the Pikunis a couple of miles above the agency, on Badger Creek, and was welcomed in the lodge of my brother-in-law Boy Chief. In a lodge near it women were wailing for the dead; in answer to my query, Boy Chief said: "They mourn for old Black Antelope. Dead because of his defiance of the gods. Hunger gnawing him, he caught some spotted fish (trout), they, as you know, the property, the food of the terrible Underwater People—food forbidden to our kind. We all begged him not to do it. He would not heed our warnings. Ordered his women to cook them for him. They would not even touch the spotted ones. He cooked them himself, ate them all, four big spotted fish. That was last night. Just before you arrived, he died."

"Too bad. Poor old man. Forever gone from us," I said. Useless for me to say that trout were healthful, nourishing and that in the many streams of the reservation there were enough of them to keep all the tribe from starving. Nor could I advise them to kill and eat their horses, which to them were sacred animals of almost human attributes—animals that they loved almost as much as they did their children. And, different from other tribes, they believed that dogs were sacred animals and therefore forbidden food.

In turn I visited White Calf's and Three Sun's large camps on Two Medicine Lodges River, then Red Paint's camp of about one hundred lodges on Birch Creek. All alike, they were increasingly suffering from want of food—the weaker, tubercular ones already dying. Of big game none remained, either on the plain or in the

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787 And said Little Bird Woman: "Oh, brother, after your fast, join
785 Seizers; they are the best clothed, best singers and dancers of all of
575 the warrior bands."

"No, you will join the Raven Carriers, they such always-successful warriors. My father, my brother were members of it," the mother said.

785 There followed some argument between mother and son over
787 which of the medicine men (Sun priests) should be asked to pray
[778] for his safety and success in his lone and strenuous fast. The result was that Fox Eyes brought in his horses, roped and led one of them before the lodge of Black Otter, owner of the sacred Thunder Pipe bundle, gave him the horse and said: "*Haiyu!* Oh, powerful, Sun-favored Thunder Pipe man. I am to undergo my lone fast. Help me. Pray for me!"

346 "Yes. Build a sweat lodge at once and I will join you in it," the old man answered.

Badger Woman, her daughter, and some of their women friends were already building the sweat lodge. In shape it was a semisphere, about ten feet in diameter; its frame, of willows; its covering, an old lodge-skin. In its center a small pit was dug; and lastly, in the near-by fire, some stones were set to heat.

783 Came presently Black Otter with his sacred pipe, a wooden bowl,
793 and a buffalo tail; and he and Fox Eyes went into the little lodge,
[778] undressed, thrust out their clothing, and naked sat. The women passed in the red-hot rocks, and with a stick Fox Eyes rolled them into the pit; lastly, the old man's bowl, filled with water, was passed
533 to him. He dipped the buffalo tail in it, sprinkled the rocks, and, as
782 dense steam began to fill the lodge, he sang the first one of his Thunder Pipe songs and then fervently prayed Sun to protect Fox Eyes, to give him success in the lone fast which he was about to endure.
[821] Followed more sprinklings of rocks; more songs; more prayers to Sun, Night Light (the moon), the Seven Persons (constellation of
778 Ursa Major), and Thunderbird. Lastly, with the sacred pipe in hand,
●776 Fox Eyes prayed the Above Ones for success in his undertaking, for
782 long life and happiness for his family, and for all of the people of his tribe.

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787 [825] want me to be your sacred helper. Well, I think that I can . . . .' And then, seeming to see or hear something that frightened him, he went leaping back into the timber, and I awoke and could not sleep again."

785 787 "Oh, too bad. Too bad," his mother wailed. "And you so desirous to obtain a helpful vision. And so hungry, thirsty. Oh, I worry about you, here likely to be discovered by some enemy war party that may [782] come along. Well, this day I shall sacrifice to Sun for you. Yes, I [292] shall give him my best, elk-teeth-trimmed gown, pray him to give [237] you quickly a helpful vision and let you safely return to us."

"Yes. Do that. And this I say to you: Do not return here until five [782] nights have passed. Your coming disturbs me. I must be alone, have [776] constant quiet in order to obtain a helpful vision. So now go, and I pray Sun to keep you safe, you three."

"Oh, my son, my son," his mother wailed. "You to lie here five nights without our help? Why, you would die from want of water."

"No. One can live longer than that without food or water. And it may be that I shall obtain my vision this coming night, or tomorrow night. And now go. It is that I must be alone and pray."

782 [776] Soon after we returned to camp, Badger Woman made a tight roll of her beautiful, valuable, elk-trimmed ceremonial gown, went out and tied it to a limb of a tree. With fervent prayer she gave it to Sun; she sought the great sky god to protect Fox Eyes in his lone fast and to give him a powerful vision. And there the gown would remain, gradually disintegrated by wind and weather. None, not even an enemy war party, would dare to steal a gift to Sun.

787 785 Five mornings later I went again with the women to the faster in the niche in the cliff, and was surprised at the change in his appearance in that short time. Emaciated and pale, he lay upon his robe, and feebly he raised a hand to greet us. But he happily smiled and said, almost whispered: "I have been given that which I sought. Take me home.

822 828 787 "Last night, as I slept after long and earnestly praying," he began, "I, my shadow (soul, spirit), left my body and traveled far, crossing a great plain. After a long time I came to the edge of a valley and saw a river in it, and I was glad, for I was very thirsty. Down I ran to it, and to the murmuring of the swift stream. Never had I heard so pleas-

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223 a hawk. The day was hot. With my back against the tree, I frequently dozed, awoke with a start, and, snatching up my telescope, eagerly leveled it at the covering of the pit. Always I could see the dark blotch of the liver in the stuffed wolf-hide. No eagle had been there. None came that day. Fox Eyes' heart was low when, as sun was setting, we headed back to camp. But there Black Otter restored his courage by saying: "You could not expect to seize an eagle on the first day in your pit, but sooner or later you will get one, for my prayers for your success are powerful."

On the following morning Fox Eyes was again in his pit, and I on watch upon the lone pine butte. Very soon I saw an eagle circling round and round, high above the pit. Suddenly he dived straight down and alighted on the ground fifteen or twenty yards to the east of it. I kept my telescope leveled at him. How big and proud he looked as he stood there plucking at and smoothing his feathers, occasionally cocking his head sideways and looking at the stuffed wolfskin. He seemed to be suspicious of it for he stood there a long time, anxiously watching it. But at last he moved, stalking slowly around the pit. Before he had half circled it, came a raven from I knew not where, at once lit upon the stuffed wolfskin, and began eating the liver. That allayed the eagle's suspicion of it and angered him. With wings half-spread, he swiftly ran to the bait, driving away the raven, and himself began to feast.

"Oh, Fox Eyes," I cried aloud in my excitement, "Seize him! Seize him!"

As if in answer to my entreaty, he did just that. All at once the eagle began to flap its wings and struggle; willow sticks and grass flew in all directions, and then the big bird disappeared. Casing my telescope, I ran to the horses and, after unfastening their picket ropes, was soon riding down my butte and up the other one. As I neared the pit, Fox Eyes climbed out of it and held the eagle up before him for me to see. It was so large that his body was almost hidden by it.

"Oh, *Apikuni!* Isn't it a big one; and how perfect its tail feathers," [776] [825] he cried as I rode up and dismounted beside him. "Oh, Sun! Oh, my powerful water-animal helper," he continued. "You have been good to me; you have powerfully helped me this day."

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The White Quiver Saga (Told by White Quiver)

WHEN IN HIS PRIME my long-ago friend *Ksiks Unopachis*—(White Quiver) was a noted warrior of the Pikunis, largest, most powerful one of the three Blackfoot Indian tribes. He was born about 1850 and died on the Blackfoot Reservation, Montana, in 1931. He was very quiet and reserved, seldom joining the gatherings of his story-telling, laughing, joking, fellow tribesmen around their evening lodge fires. It was during the annual Medicine Lodge ceremonies of the tribe, when one by one the warriors counted their coups that he particularly shone, holding his audience all but breathless as he told of his raids, his killing of enemies, and his taking of enemy horses.

On a night early in September, 1885, a war party of Crows made off with a band of horses owned by some of the Pikunis who were camped on Badger Creek, not far above their agency. A year previous to this, following instructions from Washington, the agents of the various Northwest Indian tribes had notified their charges that they must absolutely cease going on raids against their enemies. But now, having himself lost several of his horses in the raid of the night, White Quiver declared that he cared not for the orders of *Kaahks Anon* (Our Grandfather, the President). He was going to take revenge upon the Crows. Several of the Pikuni warriors wanted to go with him, but as always he refused their company. He had always been a lone raider and always would be. His sacred, powerful, secret helper, a certain animal that had appeared and counseled with him in his long-ago fasting vision (dream) had told him that to be suc-

cessful, to survive the wiles, the bullets, and the arrows of his enemies, he should always go alone against them.

There follows his tale of his last and greatest adventure, as he often told it in the long-ago:

It was Running Wolf who came hurrying into my lodge that morning and said that a war party had made off with some of our horses during the night. They had taken his swift black-and-white-spotted horses that he had tied before the doorway of his lodge. I went out with him, with the others who were camped above us, and we found that forty-one of our horses had been stolen. We found, too, the defiance of us by the stealers: their coupstick set upright in the ground behind Running Wolf's lodge, the piece of deer leather tied to it, painted with a black bird. *Ha!* The war party were Crows!

Returning to my lodge, I told my women to put into my war sack several pairs of moccasins, some pemmican, my little sacks of sacred paint, and to build a sweat lodge. Late in the day Red Eagle, powerful sacred man, owner of the Sun-favored Thunder Pipe, went into the sweat lodge with me, and, thrusting out our blankets, we sat naked within it. The women rolled in the rocks that they had heated red; we poked them into the little center pit we had dug, and, dipping a buffalo tail in a bowl of water, Red Eagle sprinkled them with it. As steam filled the lodge, and we perspired, he prayed Sun, Moon, and Morning Star to keep me safe from all dangers along the way that I was to go and to give me success in my raid upon the Crows. I prayed too, and we smoked as we sang Sun's songs and the songs of the Thunder Pipe. It was dusk when we reached outside for our blankets, and, wrapped in them, ran to the creek and plunged into its cold water; then we went home to dress.

Sad-faced and silent, my women set hot food before me. "Don't you dare cry, for that would bring me bad luck," I told them. "Be cheerful; laugh; sing; count the days of my absence as you pray for me, and that will bring good luck to all of us." Came in Red Eagle and others for a short visit and smoke with me—one advising that I ride his fast horse, so that I could quickly go to the far Crow country. I replied that riding to war was too dangerous. A horse, though well

houses, and where once our buffalo had grazed, now grazed his white horns (cattle). Is it any wonder that I felt sad?

Two mornings on from Yellow River, I arrived at the foot of Black Mountain, that lone, bare, black lift of rock at the head of It-Crushed-Them-Creek (Armell Creek) and climbed it for my rest and sleep. It had ever been a lookout place of war parties. Upon its summit was a circle of rocks, piled breast-high by some long-ago war party for shelter from the winds. I got into it, sat, and, happening to look down, found an arrow point of shiny black stone, there lost or given to the gods, perhaps, by some warrior of the very long-ago. I put it in my pouch. My finding of it, I thought, was a sign of good luck ahead for me. Once before I had rested in this rocks circle with a war party led by Heavy Runner—I his servant, learning the ways of the warrior. Then north to Big River, west to Yellow River, east to Other-Side Bear River (the Musselshell), and beyond them as far as we could see were countless herds of buffalo and antelope. And now what did I see as I looked down on It-Crushed-Them Creek? White men's houses; white horns and sheep grazing where once our own food animals had grazed. I must not think of all the wrongs we had suffered from the whites, I thought. It is now for me to do successfully this that I have set out to do. I prayed to the Above Ones, to my own secret helper, and slept.

On the following morning, just before Sun appeared, I went into hiding in the timber of Other-Side Bear River, right where, five winters back, thirty lodges of us Pikunis had camped and hunted buffalo. We had come there from the big camp of our people at Raven Quiver's (Joseph Kipp's) trading post on Yellow River. Soon having all of the meat and hides that our pack horses could carry, we set out to return there and that evening camped on It-Crushed-Them Creek. On the following day, when we were nearing Yellow River, Cold Maker brought upon us a terrible storm, and before we could arrive there two of our women and a boy froze to death. I was thinking about it as I lay down to rest. I slept and had a vision: Appeared my sacred-animal helper and said to me: "This was a bad-luck camping place for your people; some of them died upon their

787 way back from here. It may cause bad luck to you." *Ha!* Right then
776 I awoke, but what I had been told was enough. I moved on up the
777 valley and lay down in some berry brush upon its west rim. And
721 none too soon. When climbing up there I had frightened a small herd of white horns, and they had run off up the valley. And now came three white men riding down it to learn what it was that had caused them to run. Well I knew what they would have tried to do had they come upon me in the open. They disappeared in the bend of the valley below but after a time came back up, riding in the timber bordering the river, still looking for the cause of their white horns' alarm. And then I saw them no more.

721 On my third night after leaving Other-Side Bear River, I traveled as fast as I could go, hoping to reach Elk River and hide in its timber before daybreak, for the Crows might be camped right where I would strike it. As the sky in the east began to whiten, I walked still faster; ran at times. But day came, and the breaks of the river were still well ahead of me; Sun would be up in the blue before I could get down into its valley. I had been running but stopped to get my
271 wind, consider what to do. To lie on the plain all day, and without
787 water, would be painful; even then I was very thirsty. I said to my-
721 self, I must go on to water. I must risk being discovered by some
[776] enemy, early traveling out on the plain. So I went on—walking fast, then more and more slowly as I had stronger and stronger feeling that I should not try to get to the river. It was my sacred helper, I believed, warning me of danger. But I was so thirsty; would be still more thirsty. I stopped; my dry throat urged me to keep on. But my secret warning of danger was compelling. Though I all but choke
[276] from want of water, I will not go on, I at last decided, and sat down
[782] in some sagebrush, filled and lighted my pipe; with prayer, wafted smoke up toward the Above Ones and down toward Mother Earth.
721 *Ha!* I had not quite finished the smoke when two riders came out upon the plain from the river breaks, and I saw that they were Indians. They rode eastward, now at a trot, again at a walk, often turning in to look at the heads of the coulees. This was Crow country; doubtless they were Crows, looking for their horses that had strayed off in the night. After a time one of them, well in the lead, signed to

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the other one: "Come on! Come on!" and together they rode swiftly down off the plain out of my sight, having probably found their horses. Then how sure I was that the Above Ones and my secret helper, sacred animal of my vision, were powerfully aiding me; would surely help me to do this that I had set out to do. Hunger, thirst were nothing. I prayed to my powerful helpers, I sang the Wolf Song, lay down, and slept at times during the day.

I was sitting up when Sun was going down beyond the western mountains, going on to his far-off island home in the Everywhere Water. I was so thirsty that my throat and lips were swollen. The plain, so far as I could see it, was bare of any kind of life, but I was taking no chances of being discovered by Crows or whites. I waited until it was fully dark, then set out for the river. I struck the rim of the plain where, in the morning, the two riders had appeared; looking down into the valley, there, as I expected it would be, I saw the Crow camp. There were more than a hundred lodges, all glowing red with their evening fires; and faintly came to me the drumming and singing of happy people. I stole down into the valley. The camp was in a wide, long bottom of grassland and well out from the timber bordering the river. There were many horses grazing in it. I did not want any of them; my takings would be the powerful, fast, valuable horses that were nightly tied before the lodges of their owners. I passed the camp so closely west of it that I could plainly hear the people talking and little children squalling. On weak, trembly legs I pushed on through the timber and at the shore of the river, knelt, and drank and drank of its cold, soothing water. Then I sat back and for the first time ate of the pemmican in my war sack; not much, for I was saving it for just such times as this—times when, close to my enemies, I could neither kill a meat animal nor build a fire.

The water and the food gave me back my strength. I cautiously moved out to the edge of the timber to look at the camp; I would wait for the lodge fires to die out, the people to sleep, and then go in for the horses. Straight out from me, midway between the camp and the timber, some men built a large fire and began dancing in the light of it. I could plainly see them, their beautiful war clothes, their longtail war bonnets. Very graceful was their dancing and

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721 [821] I got up and stole toward the camp. Nearing its upper end, I moved more and more slowly—a step or two at a time. A horse was standing before the doorway of the uppermost one of the lodges. It was not frightened, did not move as I approached it. One of the sleepers in the lodge was snoring. Untying the short picket rope of the horse, I led him off very slowly, so slowly that his hoofs made no sound upon the thickly grassed ground. Going to the edge of the timber, I tied him there and went back for another one. But that time I got two. Then I hesitated. Should I or should I not go back to the camp once more? The horses that I had were good ones; perhaps I should be satisfied with my taking and go. But it would be as easy to make [787] off with four as it would with three; and I had strong feeling that the [776] Above Ones and my secret helper would keep me safe. Back I went [552] and led out another horse, a big, fat, well-built stallion that I at once named *Sikopi* ("Black-and-White-Spotted") because of his color. I rope-bridled him, got onto him, and leading the three others, rode slowly up onto the plain. There turning the three loose, I drove them fast, heading for home.

The Crows, no doubt, rode far and wide in search of the stealer of their four horses, but they failed to find me. I had but one bad time on my long, back trail and that was my own fault. I had stopped for the day at Yellow River, and with the horses well hidden in a dense, high, growth of willows, I had a good rest and sleep; toward evening, over a small fire, I broiled and ate plenty of the meat of a deer that I had killed that morning just before entering the timber. But I was too eager to go on, to get home with my fine taking of Crow horses. Though I better knew than to do it, though I well knew that I should remain right where I was until real night came, I started on just as Sun was going down to his western home. And no more had I gotten out upon the plain than two white men who were driving a band of white horns toward the river, saw me, came riding and yelling after me. I rode fast, too, as fast as I could drive my three loose horses. Then soon they began shooting at me with their short-guns (six-shooters), and I saw that they could overtake me. Well, I had to stop them or be killed, so I stopped, got down from my horse and began shooting with my rifle—not right at them, but close to

them. *Ha!* At once they knew that I had the best of them with my long-barreled rifle, and as I fired a fourth time they turned and fled.

Near morning of my tenth night of travel from Elk River, I came to our Pikuni camp, strung out along Badger Creek above our agency. My women were to stop with my cousin, Little Dog, and his family during my absence, so I happily went into his lodge, almost shouting: "Wake up, my cousin! Wake up, my women! I am here! I have been successful: I killed a Crow! I return with four Crow horses!"

My women sprang up and hugged me, shouting: "Our man has returned! Our man has killed an enemy! Our man has taken four enemy horses! Our man, White Quiver, he is brave!"

But Little Dog did not speak until the women had quieted, and then he said to me: "News of what you have done arrived ahead of you. The Crow agent wrote our agent that a Crow had been killed and four Crow horses had been stolen, perhaps by the Pikunis. If that proved to be true, he asked our agent to seize and hold the horses, and he would send for them. So is it that our seizers (Indian police) are looking for your return, to take the horses, should you have them.

Hearing th[illegible]oh, how angry I was! "Are we their slaves, that the whites can do this to us?" I cried. "That we fight our enemies, raid their horse herds, is of no concern whatever to the whites."

"It is as it is. You well know that we have to obey the order of the whites; we are too few to fight them. There is but one thing for you to do if you would profit from your long, hard raid: Take your four horses to the north-land and trade them to our Blood or Blackfeet relatives. And go now, at once, before our seizers begin their daily rounds."

"Yes! Go! Go at once lest our agent have you seized and put into his iron-barred-windows house," my women wailed.

"Give me food and I will go. Never shall the Crows get back these horses that I took from them," I said.

Hurriedly I ate the food that my crying women set before me, and tired, sad and angry both, was off again and facing a fierce wind- and snow-storm that Cold Maker had brought from his Always Winter Land. It was not midday when, despite the storm, I topped the

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and your kind. I know how much you enjoy raiding your enemies, but it has to end. White men's writings travel much faster than the fastest riders can go. From now on any enemy horses that you may get upon your raids will be taken from you by the white seizers as soon as you arrive home with them."

I had no reply to make to that. I turned, went out the door, on past the big corral and the Red Coats there guarding the horses within it. Back to Bear Child's house I slowly walked, and within it sat and grieved and grieved, his mother sympathizing with me. Came night, and Bear Child returned and tried to cheer me, in vain. Then, as we were going to our couches, he asked: "Tell me, friend, what is it that you now intend to do?"

"My thoughts are all mixed. I have no plan for anything," I answered.

But in the night, after much prayer and after a vision that I was given by the Above Ones, I decided upon a way to get back my horses. Came morning, and I said to Bear Child: "I want you to interpret for me once more, and I want you to get Bull's Head to send you on some errand that will keep you away from here tonight. For tonight I shall get back my horses and you are not to be blamed for it."

"But you can't get them; the Red Coats watch them all night," he said.

"You do what I ask; you will be surprised," I said, and he gave in.

Again we went in to Bull's Head, sitting, smoking in his room, and I said to him: "Bull's Head, give me your hand." He held it out; I took it, pressed its palm, closed the fingers on it, and still holding it, said: "My horses; they are in your hand, but between the fingers there are places that can be opened. Bull's Head, this is to tell you that tonight I shall get back my horses." And with that I gave him his hand.

He laughed. "White Quiver, what a joker you are."

"Maybe not," I answered, hurried from the room and back down to Bear Child's house, and told his mother what I planned to do.

"Oh, but it is too dangerous; the Red Coats will probably kill you," she cried. And after a little: "Well, as you are strong-minded to do it

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returned his gaze, frankly, unflinchingly, and said, "I don't know why I named the dancer for he is nothing to me, nothing at all; no more than the passing wind."

"What a lie! She loves him so much that she can't think of anything else, even to remember that it was her awl that she wanted."

And Handsome Man and his followers heard; they had heard it all, so close were they to our shelter. The followers were embarrassed; their heads drooped; they looked at the ground, anywhere but toward us. But Handsome Man was pleased; boldly, smilingly, he looked at Otter Woman; glanced at angry Talks-with-the-Buffalo and again at Otter Woman. Happily, smugly, he looked at her, sure that, despite her denial of him, she, the most beautiful woman of the camp, was still another victim of his charms. Warily he glanced again at her grimly scowling man; again he smiled at her, and, signing to his followers to resume their drumming, went singing and dancing from us with renewed vigor and grace. Of us all, *Otahki* alone watched his sprightly going. Otter Woman raised her drooping head, tearfully, pleadingly looked at Talks-with-the-Buffalo, and began: "My man . . . ."

He shrugged his shoulders, looked away from her. As though half-dazed, she fumblingly gathered up her quilling materials and went slowly into their lodge. *Otahki* laughed. Her sister *Paiota* frowned at her and said: "Be still, you!"

Silently I handed the smoked-out pipe to my friend and joined Bear Head and his women, sitting under their sun shelter. They had sensed something unpleasant whence I had come, and I told them what had happened. Poor Otter Woman. Never could she be at peace there in that family, they said, for *Otahki* was of very mean heart, very jealous of her, and would do all that she possibly could to make Talks-with-the-Buffalo cast her off.

I had at that time a fly rod, one that I had brought from the States and dearly cherished, for it was, so far as I knew, the only fly rod in all Montana Territory. At sundown that evening I went fishing, accompanied by Bear Head. Not that he fished, or even ate fish, for they were the food of the dread Underwater People and therefore taboo by all of the Blackfoot tribes. But he keenly enjoyed

ward, some Black Robes lived. Old Mission, not far below there, was Heavy Shield's camp, and Big Skunk set up his camp of many lodges on Point-of-Rocks River, close to where it flows into Big River.

Came Falling-Leaves Moon and a number of the men of my father's camp and Calf Looking's camp set out to raid the horses of the Flatheads (Kalispel tribe), going by way of the pass at the head of Two Medicine Lodges River. There were four who went from Calf Looking's camp and one of them was Big Snake, he who had the longest hair of all of our people, men and women. It was gray, and its braids were so long that they hung down almost to the ground as he walked. To the right front braid was always tied a white shell in which were seven holes, they representing the Seven Persons (Ursa Major), to whom he prayed. In a sun-given vision that he had experienced they had appeared to him and said they would be his sacred, powerful helpers.

It was in the Falling-Leaves moon when the war party set out to raid the Flatheads, and winter had come when the members of it from my father's camp returned—came charging, singing in with many horses that they had taken from the Flatheads and proudly waving some Flathead scalps. And at once they inquired for the four other members of their party: Big Snake, Yellow Weasel, Cut Finger, and New Robe. Had we seen them or heard of their return? Learning that we knew nothing of them, they went on to say that, soon after they had crossed the Backbone (the Rockies), Big Snake and his three friends had left them; had turned north to raid the Kutenai people, and they wondered what had been their success.

Early morning after the return of the war party, my father told me to round up our horses and catch two of them, his fast buffalo horse, Short Tail, and my favorite horse, Striped Face, for he was going hunting and I was to accompany him and help him butcher his kills.

I soon had the horses tied before our lodge. My mother set food before us. We ate plenty, saddled, and were off, riding southward out upon the plain, expecting soon to sight a herd of buffalo. But none were in sight when we topped the rim of the plain, and we rode on and on, my father repeatedly saying: "Now, this is strange! But

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224 three days ago everywhere out here were herds of buffalo grazing, resting, and now there are none. Nor have our hunters been out this way. Why, then, did the herds leave so suddenly? I don't like it. [787] I believe that it is a warning that danger of some kind threatens us."

"Then let us go back, go home, or hunt north of our camp," I proposed.

"No. We will keep on. Watch carefully ahead for the danger, whatever it may prove to be," my father answered.

We rode on and on, still without sighting a buffalo herd nor even any old, straggling bulls. So going, we came to a large, grassy lake, upon which many flocks of swans, geese, and ducks were resting, feeding, loudly honking and quacking—a flock now and then rising and going on southward toward the Always-Summer-Land.

[821] Said my father: "Those water birds are better off than we are.
● [776] They can go where Cold Maker cannot follow them, and we have to endure his snow and cold."

"But why can't we all go, too, down into that Always-Summer-Land?" I asked.

"Good reason why we can't: so many tribes of enemies down there that they would kill us off."

721 No sooner had he answered my question when, topping a little ridge just beyond the south end of the lake, we discovered not far ahead a party of men on foot—a war party of some kind, without [201] doubt. And seeing us, one of them stepped aside from the others and signed to us: "Come on. Join us. Smoke with us. Our hearts are good. We will be at peace with you."

"Oh, don't go. They are our enemies. They will kill us," I cried to my father.

Again the man signed to us, this time saying: "Come on. Join us. Smoke with us. We are Crows. We will be friends together."

[648] Said my father to me: "My son, though they are Crows, our worst enemies, I cannot be a coward. I have to accept their offer, go smoke with them. So come on."

Oh, how frightened I was as we neared those many Crows—fifty- [201] three of them—all well armed, staring solemnly at us. Signed their leader as we came to them and got down from our horses: "It is good

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that you have come to smoke with us Crows. Now, tell us, who are you?" [721]

Signed my father, "We are Pikunis." Then said to me, as it is bad luck for men to speak their own names: "Son, tell them who I am." [201] [777]

Tremblingly I complied. "He is my father. His name, it is Bear Chief. He is a Pikuni chief," I signed. [551]

"Good," the Crow leader signed. And then: "You are Bear Chief, Pikuni chief. I am Painted Shield, Crow chief. So now we will sit and smoke together and have a good talk."

With that he pointed to the near top of a small ridge that the wind had blown bare of snow. We went there, sat down in a circle, and Painted Shield had one of the men fill and light a big pipe to be smoked in turn by all. As it came to my father I felt better and said to him: "You smoke the peace pipe with them, so is it that we are safe. They will not harm us in any way."

"With any other enemy war party that would be true. But the Crows are different. They are liars. A peace smoke means nothing to them. Son, I have to be very wise else this will be the end for us," my father answered, and again I was full of fear. [186]

As the pipe went the round of our circle, was smoked out, refilled, and started on another round of us, my father and the Crow chief sign-talked to one another. Painted Shield said that he was leading his party to cross the Backbone and raid the horse herds of the west-side people; my father, in turn, said that we were on our way from our camp on Milk River to visit in the camp of the Pikuni chief, Calf Looking, on Point-of-Rocks River. Hearing him say that, how surprised I felt. Almost I cried out to him about it but held back in time, well knowing that whatever he said or did he would have good reason for it. [721] [201]

And then, at last, my father signed to Painted Shield: "My friend, see, Cold Maker is coming down from the north with more cold wind and snow. Best that you and your friends go with me to Calf Looking's camp and rest. Eat plenty, sleep in the warm lodges, and so in the morning be strong to go on your way." [821] [776]

All of the Crows looked to the north. True, Cold Maker was coming, hidden in a black cloud low down upon the plain. Signed Painted

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[721] [201] Shield: "Bear Chief, it is true; Cold Maker is coming. We will be glad to go with you to the camp of your friends for the night. So let us go at once. You and your son lead the way. Walk your horses, even trot them. We will keep up with you."

[821] [776] We had traveled but a little way when Cold Maker overtook us with his fierce, cold wind and snow so blinding that we could only dimly see each other. But my father was sure of his course, and as we neared Point-of-Rocks River, Cold Maker was suddenly gone on with his storm and Sun was setting in clear, blue sky. As he passed out of sight behind the Backbone, we came to the rim of Point-of-Rocks River and looked down upon the camp of Calf Looking. But instead of the forty lodges of his band we could see only ten, and my father groaned: "*Haiya, haiya!* Oh, how unfortunate for us. So few of them there! Oh, Sun. Pity us. Help us in some way to survive the danger of these many Crows."

Then Painted Shield was signing to him: "Those down there are the lodges of your kind, your friends?"

Smiling, pretending to be happy, my father answered: "Yes, those down there are my relatives. Come, we will join them. Good are their hearts. Soon you will be resting before their lodge fires, eating plenty, [533] smoking." And with that he led us on, loudly singing our song of peace and friendship. All of the people of the lodges ran to stand with Calf Looking and his women before his lodge and stare at us, the men with weapons ready for instant use. And oh, how big, how frightened were the women's and children's eyes.

[201] Calf Looking, laying aside his gun, advanced to meet us, and my father signed and also said to him: "Calf Looking, this is Painted Shield and his war party of Crows. I invited them to stop with you all for the night."

"Good! Good!" he signed to Painted Shield. "Crow chief, we are glad that you have come. You all will rest and smoke and eat with us. My lodge will not hold you all, so, Painted Shield, divide your men, half of them to stop in that lodge next to mine, the lodge of my brother, Running Rabbit."

"I will do as you say. Generous you are," Painted Shield sign-answered and, turning to his men, named those of them to go into

The Baker Massacre

I was born seventy-nine winters ago on Yellow (Judith) River. 000
My father, Bear Head, was a tall, handsome man and a great warrior. My mother, Fair Singing Woman, was beautiful. Though quite young, she had even then become a sacred woman, one of the women who, every summer, build a great lodge to give to Sun. Dearly my father and mother loved me, and I loved them. As soon as I could walk, my mother furnished me with soft, beaded, deer leather clothes for summer, furs for winter. And my father gave me little bows and 868
arrows and taught me to ride gentle horses; gave me six horses when 524
I was in my sixth winter. Four of them were mares, so I was soon having quite a band of horses of my own. I loved to play with the [776]
boys, and I loved to sit before the evening lodge fires listening to the warriors and hunters telling of their brave deeds—the old men telling of the power and goodness of Sun and all the other gods.

Came my eighth summer, and my father, getting ready to go with 701
a party against some of our enemies, said that I must go, too. My 702
mother objected; cried; said that I was too young to go to war, that it would be too dangerous for her little one. Said my father to her: "Last night, as I slept, Sun gave me a vision. We were a war party. [787]
Our young one was traveling at my side. We discovered enemies, fought, and killed them. The meaning of that is plain. It is that your young First Rider goes with me, with our party, and that he will survive the dangers that we encounter. And well you know that I was of his age when I first took to the war trail. So must he now go. I shall make of him a real warrior."

First Rider—that was the name given me when I was born; given [551]
me by an old medicine man because of one of his visions, in which he [553]
saw a member of a war party be first to take an enemy horse and [787]
ride it off.

Well, my mother knew that my father would have his way about me, so she made no more objection to my going but got together the things that I would need, extra pairs of moccasins, a rope, awl, and sinew thread; and crying, she said to me: "You have to go. I shall [782]
pray, constantly pray the Above Ones to give you safe return to me."

I was eager to go. I wanted to become a great warrior, kill many enemies, take many enemy horses, and so be honored, made a chief by

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others would have run away before I could reload it. How happy I was that I owned the many-shots gun. I sang as I rode home with the five hides and some of the meat. Arriving there, I told of my five kills, and several needy ones rode up the mountain to get the carcasses and the good fat meat that I had left upon the high slope. 224

Some days later I rode out again for meat for my family, this time in the valley below the lake. Presently I saw three elk go down a grassy slope and enter a big stand of pines and cottonwoods bordering the river. I got off my horse, picketed him, and, following a game trail, went slowly into the timber after them. There was such a thick growth of willows and rose brush in it that I could see but a little way in any direction except straight ahead along the trail. I was turning a bend in it when I heard a pattering of feet, and suddenly two small young bears, playfully running and biting at one another, ran into me, and getting my odor, ran on loudly squalling.

Then, angrily roaring, came their mother, a big real-bear (grizzly) rounding the bend of the trail and straight toward me. Twice I shot at her, knew I hit her each time, but she kept leaping on; with two or three more leaps she would be upon me, kill me. Aiming at her big, wide mouth, I fired another shot. The bullet went through her mouth, her throat, and, as I afterward found, broke her backbone. She fell, slid almost to my feet, and, quivering a little, died.

I found that I was trembling, so weak that I had to sit down. I said to myself: "My last shot. If it had missed her mouth, my body would now be lying there, torn all apart."

That morning when I got up, I had prayed Sun to pity me, to help me survive all dangers that might beset me, and to give me success in all of my undertakings. I now knew that Sun had helped me. That swiftly coming, leaping bear, never could I have shot her in her mouth had He not helped me do it. Raising my hands to the sky, "Sun," I vowed, "the hide of this real-bear, softly tanned, I shall give to you in the coming Berries-Ripe Moon." 224 782 [776]

A crowd of people gathered around me when I came to the doorway of my lodge and drew the big hide down off my saddle. My mother and my almost-mothers came running out, and my mother 000

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CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Plenty of Buffalo Meat
(Told by Many-Tail-Feathers)

224 TO DECOY AND SUDDENLY PUT TO DEATH a herd of buffalo, that is just what the prehistoric, nomadic, Indian tribes of our northwestern and Canada's western plains did whenever meat and hides were needed. [175] And they continued that activity into historic time, even up to a period definitely determined to have been somewhere around 1843–46. The Blackfoot, Crow, Assiniboine, Gros Ventre, and Kalispel Indian tribes all did it; but I shall tell only of the four Blackfoot tribes' way of it, as I have been an active member of them for sixty-three years and have heard their stories of it all many, many times. The Blackfoot belief that dreams are actual experiences of their shadows (souls) while their bodies sleep, and that Sun is the supreme god of earth and sky, enters into it all.

To begin with, there are four tribes of the Blackfoot Indian Confederacy: the Blackfoot, Blood, and North Piegan tribes of Alberta, and the Pikuni tribe of the Blackfoot Reservation, Montana. Of all the story tellers (historians) of the four tribes, I considered Many-Tail-Feathers of the Montana tribe best of all. He died in 1925 in his ninetieth year, and it was his father, also named Many-Tail-Feathers, who, because of his powerful dream, put an end to the decoying and slaughtering of buffalo herds by the four tribes. And so to my old friend's tale of it all, as follows:

In that very-far-back time our ancestors were but one large tribe, the Blackfeet. It was not easy for the hunters to obtain meat and

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father, Many-Tail-Feathers, who was a powerful decoyer, had long been urging our chiefs that we use the *piskan* there, and at last they had given in to his plea. He was a great warrior as well as a decoyer. He was married to three sisters; my mother, the eldest one, was his sits-beside-him-wife. 224

We made camp on the north side of the river, opposite the *piskan* on its south side. On the following morning my father and our chiefs climbed to the top of the sacred butte for a look at the country, and I followed them. We arrived upon its flat top. There, long since, some of our Sun's men had, with many white stones, made a figure very large, of Old Man (a powerful but mischievous god of the Blackfoot tribes). Yes, it was a very large figure of him, his arms and legs outstretched. When we stopped before it my father made a prayer. "*Haiyu*, Old Man!" he chanted. "Pity us, help us to prosper. Our *piskan*, there close below us, help me fill it with buffalo." And as one man the others chanted: "*Haiyu*, Old Man! Help us to prosper! Give to us long and full life." 776 778 782 224

We then sat down and looked off. In all directions, near and far, the plain was dotted with herds of buffalo and antelope, some grazing, some resting, others going to and from water. Said my father: "Sun is good to us; just see how plentiful are the animals that he created for our use. Let us smoke and pray to him." 224 [776] [782]

Four pipefuls, sacred number, they smoked one after another as they prayed to Him, sang His sacred songs, and then we returned to camp. Many of our people, with their horses, were drawing old logs and tree branches out to repair and heighten the *piskan*. Not a cliff *piskan*, it was at the mouth of a small, short coulee running down from the plain, and the cut bank at its inner side was just high enough to prevent the buffalo jumping back out of it. From the head of the coulee, of course, ran the two ever-diverging lines of rock piles, and just beyond them was the little ridge so necessary for preventing a herd, farther out, from seeing the decoyer and the frighteners hurrying out to take their various places. [276] [801] [533]

Came night, and in our lodge my father and some of his friends smoked and prayed Sun for quick success at the *piskan*. *Ha!* Before the middle of next day our watchers came hurrying down from Old [276] [782]

real-bear, besought him as he loved his women and children, for help. Said he: 'I have been thinking about your troubles, your failures in hunting and in your raids upon our enemies. Now, tell me something that you will not like to tell, but that I must know if I am to help you. It is this. In your youth—your before-marriage time—you endured your sacred fast. Well, what was the helpful vision that you then had?'

"His request surprised me. It is between the gods and the sacred faster, the vision that they give him. But this was different. Talks-with-the-Buffalo was a very powerful sacred-pipe man, close to the gods. He would not ask of me anything that would do me harm. Anyhow, I would risk it. So I gave him the name of the animal that had come to me in my vision and promised to help me in all that I should do. 'What did that animal tell you that you should do in return for his help?'

"When I had told him of that, and fully, he asked if I had always done as the animal had said I must do, and I had to confess that I had once failed. I had forgotten to make a certain sacrifice to the Above Ones, and a dog had eaten it.

"'*Ha!* And thereafter your bad-luck times began. You should have told me of it long ago. And now it is that you will have to endure another sacred fast, try to obtain another powerful helper. Yes, and I know the very place for it. The top of Chief Mountain. There where Eagle Head obtained the vision that enabled him to become the most powerful warrior and successful hunter that our tribe ever had. Yes. There you must fast, taking up there with you, as he did, a buffalo head for your pillow.'

" 'I do not like to go so far from our people to fast,' I answered.

" 'We will move up close to the mountain. I will advise Big Lake and our other chiefs to do it,' he said.

"The chiefs willingly granted his request, and three days later we made camp on Many Chiefs' River (St. Mary) and not far from the foot of Chief Mountain. On the following day Talks-with-the-Buffalo had a sweat lodge made, and in it, as we perspired, he prayed Sun and all the Above Ones, and his own sacred helper, too, to give me strength to endure a sacred fast and to give me a helpful vision. And again he loaned me his gun.

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"So on the next morning we mounted our horses and set out for the mountain, Talks-with-the-Buffalo, my two women, and I. Upon our way to it, I took up the whitened, dry head of a buffalo bull that had been killed in the run of a herd that our hunters had made three summers back. Arrived at the mountain, we rode up the west slope of it as far as our horses could carry us and then, leaving them, climbed up to the summit, arriving there a little after Sun had passed the center of the blue. In a small, level place on the very top of the mountain, we found the buffalo head that Eagle Head had used for a pillow and another head brought up there by some far-back sacred faster of our people.

"My women had brought along my bedding, two buffalo robes and a blanket. They went back down the slope, got some pine branches and made a good bed for me, placing the buffalo head at the west end of it so that I could see Sun as he came every morning to travel across the blue. Then Talks-with-the-Buffalo again prayed for me, and, crying, my women joined him in singing some sacred songs. And then they left me. For a little I stood, looking off at our great plain, at our Pine Needles Buttes (Sweetgrass Hills), at our Bear Paw Mountains, much farther to the east. Would I ever camp and hunt among them again? Earnestly I prayed Sun for help, for a good vision, and stretched out upon my couch.

"I slept continuously, had no vision on that night. Awoke hungry and thirsty, became more so as the day wore on. For two more nights I lay there, sleeping at times, becoming weak from want of food and water, often praying the Above Ones for help. At last they took pity on me. On my fourth night there they gave me a very sacred vision. Came to me a certain animal that frequents the water, all but lives in it, and said that he would help me in all of my undertakings; and that in return for his help I should do certain things for him in the way of prayers and sacrifices. Oh, how pleased I was. Although so weak that I could hardly stand, still I felt that I had power to do great deeds.

"As they had agreed to do, next morning came Talks-with-the-Buffalo and my women to learn how I was getting along, and pleased

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they were when I told them that, at last, on my fourth night, I had obtained a powerful vision, that a certain water animal was to be my helper.

"Then my sits-beside-me-wife asked: 'Tell us, was it one of the long-bodied, short-legged fish eaters, or was it one of the smaller, fluffy-furred kind that eats both fish and birds?'

"'Oh, you woman,' Talks-with-the-Buffalo yelled at her, 'Are you crazy that you would have him name his vision animal and so break the power that it has given him?' And he went on scolding her until she cried.

"Well, they half carried me down to the horse that they had brought for me to ride, and, oh, how I did drink of the water of the first spring that we came to. And then, in my lodge, how good it was to rest upon my soft couch and eat good meat, and smoke with the many friends who came in to visit with me. I told them about the powerful vision that the Above Ones had given me, there on top of sacred Chief Mountain, and then that great warrior, Three Bears, said that he was so sure of it that he wanted me to join a war party that he was about to lead against the Crows. *Ha!* How glad I was to know that he was sure that my bad-luck times were ended. How strong to go I felt.

"There were thirty in our party, Three Bears our leader, and Talks-with-the-Buffalo our sacred pipe man. I carried a gun and a pistol that my brothers-in-law loaned me. Many nights we traveled southward, rafting across Big River, fording Yellow (Judith) River and Other-Side Bear (Musselshell) River, at last rafting across Elk (Yellowstone) River and following up Bighorn River. As with every war party, our sacred-pipe man rested and slept away from us, praying the Above Ones and his own sacred helper for a revealing vision of what was ahead of good or bad for us.

"Came the evening of our second day of rest up in Bighorn River Valley, and when Talks-with-the-Buffalo joined us to eat the meat that I had broiled for him, he said that enemies were not far ahead of us, that we must proceed very cautiously for the Above Ones had given him a vision. In his sleep he had seen two parties of men fight-

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in his heart, drew him ashore, scalped him, then scalped the other one I had killed. And then I knew, oh, I knew that my luck had turned, that my bad-luck times were over. And so said Talks-with-the-Buffalo and others.

"Thereafter all war leaders were eager for me to join their war parties, and after a time I myself became a leader and had great success against our enemies. As you all know, eleven enemies I have killed, and more than one hundred enemy horses, taken. All that because of my vision on top of Chief Mountain."

"And so, *Apikuni,* friend, you now know how and why two of the buffalo skulls on top of Chief Mountain were placed there. *Haiya!* How powerful, how they were helped by the Above Ones, our Pikuni warriors of the long-ago," ended my friend, Returns-with-Plenty, and signed me to fill another pipe.

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726 154 [787] ing one another and one of the parties had turned and run, the other party pursuing them. They had been far from him, but the pursuing party had appeared to have been of our own Pikuni tribe.

"So was it that all through the night we went on more watchfully than ever, and with the first faint white light of morning, went into hiding in the upper end of a grove on the west side of the valley, our leader sending two scouts to the top of its slope to watch any movements of enemies. As we ate some meat that we had broiled on the previous day, Talks-with-the-Buffalo said that he would not rest and sleep off by himself for he had the feeling that danger threat- [788] ened us, was near. Yes, and his vision had warned him of it. He was right.

"Sun was not halfway up in the blue when our scouts came running in, awakened us, and said that a war party of more than twenty men, afoot, was coming down the valley. We hurried to the upper end of the grove in which we had stopped, and, sure enough, there the enemy were, out in the open bottom and coming straight toward us. We stood still until they were within close gunshot of us, and then began shooting at them. A few fell. The others ran to the willows bordering the river, jumping from a cut bank down into them.

"We reloaded our guns, went to the cut bank, and, cautiously looking down from its rim, could see some of the enemy and were able to shoot more of them. At last we could see no living ones but were sure that a few, unhurt, remained there in hiding. So our leader divided us into two parties, one to start at the lower end of the willows, the other one at their upper end, and so go in and hunt for [782] the living. I was with the upper party. As we moved in, I, the one [776] of us closest to the river, kept praying, '*Haiya*, Sun! *Haiya*, Sun! [787] *Haiya*, you powerful water animal of my vision! Pity me. Keep me safe. Help me to make to cry these our enemies.'

"Suddenly there was shooting and yelling ahead of us, and then seven of the enemy came running and shooting at us. I shot down one of them; another one, tall and heavy bodied, turned and ran [727] for the river, I after him. He dropped his empty gun as he took to [777] the water. I dropped mine, swam, took after him, overtook him, and we slashed at one another with our knives. I stabbed him in the breast,

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Indians obtained its seeds from them and began planting them, and that finally the Blackfeet got seeds of the sacred plant from the latter tribe.

The Blackfoot Tobacco Planters are a society of Sun priests—so-called medicine men—and the leader of them is the owner of the Water, or Beaver, bundle, consisting of the prime-furred hides of beaver, otter, mink, and other water animals. The ceremonies preparatory for planting the seeds are held in his lodge—four days and four nights of prayers and songs to Sun and all of the Above People. Prayers more fervent, inspiring than any offered by the most zealous of Methodist preachers. Songs deeply solemn, soul lifting; truly as classic as the music of Mendelssohn and Beethoven. During this time the sick are welcomed in the lodge, and, after painting their faces and hands with Sun's sacred color, red ocher, the Planters pray for their recovery and prosperous long life—prayers believed to be ever efficacious except through some fault of the sick one.

Each member of the Planters society having selected the place for his garden, his women and children burn the brush and weeds upon it, make it ready for planting. On the fourth and last day of the ceremonies a large, buffalo rawhide vessel shaped like a dishpan is brought into the lodge and filled with a mixture of manure and serviceberry soup, and then the tobacco seeds are stirred into it. The vessel is then taken to the gardens—in a large cottonwood grove bordering Bow River—and each Planter drops pinches of its contents into holes in his plot that he has made with a sharp-pointed stick, then fills the holes with loose earth.

During the four days' ceremonies, the sits-beside-him-wife of each Planter has made two images—one of a man, the other of a woman. Each of them has an extra pair of moccasins and a little pouch of pemmican. For the closing rite of the ceremonies, the Planters pray to their images, entreat them to guard carefully their plantings from all depredations, and then place them at the heads of their gardens. And finally the people are warned not to go to or even near the gardens, lest the images do them grievous harm. Long ago, a crazy young man of the tribe, singing a song of defiance, went to the gardens and stole some of the sacred tobacco leaves, with the

24: Schultz F-3 (1877-1947) 1980 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

726 a brave warrior of twenty-five, and his eighteen-year-old, beautiful sister, Lance Woman, and said that they wanted to join the party.

701 Said *Pinukwiim:* "Lance Woman, my almost-daughter— I call you
726 that because Three Bears, your father, is my very close friend—the long and dangerous war trail that we are to follow is not for such as you, but glad I am to have your brother join us.

Said the girl: "In the very long-age there was a woman warrior, a leader of warriors, to whom, because of her bravery and success, the chiefs gave a man's name, 'Running Eagle' . . . ."

"Yes. And what became of her?" *Pinukwiim* interrupted.

"Raiding a camp of the Kutenais, she was killed. No, almost-daughter not for you the war trail, you so soon to marry brave, good-hearted Young Bull."

787 At mention of that name, Lance Woman drooped, sighed; then
821 straightening up, she loudly said: "I cannot marry him because of a
● 776 vision that I have had—a vision that I belong to Morning Star, and
701 must go to war."
726 At that all stared at her, and said *Pinukwiim:* "What? A vision, do you say?"

"Yes. In my sleep last night, came to me a tall, beautiful war-clothed man, light shining from him, and said: 'I am Morning Star. I have long watched you. You are mine. You must not marry unless I in my own way give you consent. I want you to paint your forehead as mine is painted and go to war, take many horses.' Then as suddenly as he appeared he was gone."

Loud were the exclamations of her hearers when she finished. How wonderful, how very powerful was her vision. Surely that great sky god, chief of warriors, favored her, favored the Pikunis. Said *Pinukwiim* to her: "Morning Star, next to Sun, is the most powerful of the sky gods. So. He vanished. You awoke. What then?"

"I felt very strange. I thought and thought about my vision, kept it to myself until, my brother saying he would join your war party, I told him of it and that I, too, must go."

"So you shall," *Pinukwiim* assured her. "Yes, and we will do our best to teach you the ways of war. For as the gods direct, so must we do."

A Bride for Morning Star

Tall, handsome, proud Young Bull had entered and stood just within the doorway listening. Lance Woman turned and saw him, sadly said: "Oh, my sweetheart! You heard then. *Kyaiyo! Kyaiyo!* We are not to set up a lodge together."

"Yes, I heard. It is true that, as the gods direct, so must we do. Well, though we cannot marry, I shall be ever with you on your war trails," he answered, and that, too, had the loud approval of our circle.

Proud, pleased was Lance Woman's crippled father when, returning home, she told him of her vision and that she was to follow *Pinukwiim* to war. Chiefs, medicine men, staid old warriors hurried to Three Bears' lodge to be told in full the vision and recount the brave deeds and sing the songs of that long-ago woman warrior, Running Eagle; and tell Lance Woman that she must be such another virgin leader of Pikuni warriors.

(As you well know, dreams—visions, as they call them—powerfully influence the lives of Blackfoot people. To them, dreams are actual experiences that enable them to learn what the future has in store for them of good or ill. For instance, if one dreams of green grass, it is that he will live to see the new-growing grass of another summer.)

Came the day for us to go, and we were ten men and one woman busily preparing to follow *Pinukwiim* into the far-south land. Of these there was one, White Antelope, whom the chiefs hesitated to accept, for he had long been a persistent and unsuccessful suitor of Lance Woman. However, because of his well-known bravery, *Pinukwiim* finally told him that he could go. He was tall, eagle-beak nosed, fierce appearing, of some twenty-five winters. My main preparation for the long trail was to go to the fort, where I had a good sum to my credit, and draw out two hundred dollars in gold for possible emergencies. The bourgeois, forceful, friendly Alexander Culbertson, head of the American Fur Company in the Upper Missouri River country, advised me not to go. His good wife, Sacred Snake Woman, said that she was glad that I was going, as I could do much to protect her good young friend, Lance Woman.

Sun was near setting when with our saddled and pouches-laden

25: Ewers E,G-5 (1941-1951) 1963 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Nevertheless, Weasel Tail, an aged Blood Indian who was one of my best informants in the 1940's, recalled a tradition that his people had at one time made pipe bowls of clay. He understood that wet clay was moulded around an elkhorn to give it the proper shape. After the clay dried the horn was slipped out, leaving a tubular, clay pipe. 323 276 [115]

However, Weasel Tail agreed with other elderly informants that the most common tobacco pipe bowl among the Blackfoot Indians in the earliest times of which they had heard was a tubular one of stone, which they all referred to as a "straight pipe." Both Weasel Tail and Green-Grass-Bull thought that straight pipes were made before the Blackfoot obtained iron tools from the Whites, and that the holes were drilled with flint tools, probably working from both ends toward the center, while the outer surfaces were finished by rubbing with "sand rock." [412]

Robert N. Wilson, who lived among the Blood Indians for more than 60 years as a Mounted Policeman, Indian Agent, and trader, possessed a collection of Blood Indian artifacts which included a straight pipe. Some of the elders of the Blood tribe considered that pipe to be the oldest known specimen of Blood Indian craftsmanship. Pete Bruised Head described this pipe to me as about 6 inches long and of a dark-colored stone. Unfortunately, this relic was stolen from Mr. Wilson's home at Standoff, Alberta, very shortly after his death. Its present location is unknown to me. 276 [177] [115]

Wissler published a native drawing of a straight pipe which was in the sacred beaver bundle owned by Tom Kiyo, a Piegan, in the early years of this century. The drawing depicts a pipe of a slightly bulbous shape, the sides tapering from the center toward each end. Wissler regarded the beaver bundle as the oldest of the several classes of Blackfoot ceremonial bundles, and he considered Tom Kiyo's beaver bundle to be one of the oldest of this class (Wissler, 1912, pp. 170–171, fig. 25). However, the Blackfoot straight pipe also was the ceremonial property of the owners of the black and yellow buffalo tipis. Wissler was told that the "straight-bowled pipe" was given to the beaver bundle owners by the owners of the buffalo-painted lodges (ibid., p. 232). 276 778

It may be significant that in Blackfoot mythology both the beaver bundle and the buffalo-painted lodges were represented as gifts to the Indians from underwater spirits. Short Face, who was reputed to have been the most able reciter of Blackfoot myths among the Indians living on the Blackfeet Reservation in the 1940's, told me the following story of the use of the straight pipe by the first owner of one of the two buffalo-painted lodges: [773] [776] [115]

28: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1967 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
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few crops would prosper in that water-deficient region, is mentioned rarely and then briefly.[5]

Time raises equally important problems. Ancient customs may be remembered in myth long after they have vanished from the scene entirely or are operative only on special and usually ceremonial occasions. The buffalo hunt still has a central role in Blackfoot mythology, although the buffalo disappeared by 1880. The emphasis on the bow and arrow is similarly out of focus. On the other hand, new elements may be introduced (the horse in Navaho legend); or again, and this is more frequent, they may not. Blackfoot tales tell nothing of the wheat farming which became a substantial feature of Blackfoot economy in the early 1900's or of the frame houses that replaced the skin "lodges" years before.

Such irregularities should not discourage us from utilizing mythological texts, but they should warn against a simplistic interpretation of social life and personality structure in a given community over a long period of time. Necessarily, any feature indicated in a myth, whether a material object, institution, attitude, or relationship has reality. But it may be entirely incorrect to conclude from this that these different features carry the same weight in the actual situation as they do in the myth. The stories of Old Man, an important source of information for any study of Blood attitudes toward the father or father substitute, while extremely suggestive, would not provide a safe basis for predicting which attitude was given the greatest emphasis today—at least not on the overt level. Only a knowledge of Blood society as a whole and over time enables us to evaluate the single features properly.

The Blackfoot stories about Old Man (*napiw*[6]) are of two kinds. One cycle reveals him as creator and giver, a beneficent being who makes the earth and all that lives on it, provides a language for the people, teaches the skills of hunting and warfare and the ways of marriage.[6] The second is very different both in substance and conception. It discloses Old Man as a malevolent being, a trickster who stops at nothing. He does not hesitate to retrieve a robe given earlier as a gift.[7] He steals leggings from a stranger who offers him a night's lodging. He gouges out coyote's eyes. He roasts squirrels to death in hot ashes. He thrusts his oversized penis (lariot) through the ground until it "raises" and kills a

[5] Karl A. Wittfogel and Esther S. Goldfrank, "Some Aspects of Pueblo Mythology and Society," *J. of Am. Folklore*, LVI: 23, 1943.

[6] John Maclean, *Canadian Savage Folk*, Toronto, 1896, pp. 51 ff.; see also *idem*, "Blackfoot Mythology," *J. Am. Folklore*, VI: 165, 1893.

[7] Except where otherwise indicated, the themes cited appear in Clark Wissler and D. C. Duvall, *op. cit.*

28: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1967 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
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girl picking strawberries. He decapitates babies left alone momentarily, placing their heads in their cradles and their bodies in a pot to boil.

Repulsive as these crimes are, Old Man frequently "gets away with it." But frequently too he is fooled and punished. He may be beaten in a race by coyote, who, simulating lameness at the start, later outruns him and makes off with his meat. He may lose the medicine leggings he has stolen. He may be double-crossed by women feigning death. He may be defecated on because he split open the mouths of young nighthawks. He may lose his eyes because he failed to heed a warning. He may be rejected in marriage and become a pine tree.

Such vulnerability makes it clear that Old Man is no "perfect" godhead—today even in the creation myths he is forced to give in to Old Woman, who, though expected to have only "second say," seems, in many important instances, to make the final decisions.[8] On the other hand, the harm Old Man endures is, in most cases, considerably lighter than the suffering he inflicts. Mclean, writing in 1896, held that Old Man was not the "Great Spirit," but a secondary creator.[9] Whether or not he was the primary, and as such, a "perfect" divinity in the original Blackfoot creation myth—and Wissler believes "that the Blackfoot formerly had a well-defined creation myth, in which the Old Man took the initiative in producing and transforming the world"[10]—his identification, now and for decades,[11] with the shabby and amoral trickster certainly puts him closer to man than to God. And the Blood leave no doubt as to the completeness of this identification: in the same tale, Old Man appears both as trickster and creator.[12]

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A comparison of Blackfoot myths—the earliest to be mentioned ap-

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[8] *Op. cit.*, pp. 19 ff. Old Woman, contrary to Old Man's decision, insists that tanning the hides (woman's work) must be made very difficult "so that the good workers may be found out." Again, contrary to Old Man, she insists that, while people will have eyes and mouths in their faces, these "shall all be set crosswise" and "not straight up and down." Similarly, she insists that "there shall be four fingers and one thumb on each hand," and not, as Old Man suggested, "ten fingers on each hand." And when Old Man says, "The genitals shall be at our navels," Old Woman answers, "No, that will make childbearing too easy; the people will not care for their children. The genitals shall be at the pubes." And it is Old Woman who decides by the throw of her rock that "it is better for people to die forever; for if they did not die forever, they would never feel sorry for each other, and there would be no sympathy in the world." But Old Man does get the last word: When Old Woman's daughter dies, she regrets her earlier decision. "Let us have our say over again," she pleads. But this time Old Man is adamant. "No," he answers, "we fixed it once."

[9] John Maclean, *Canadian Savage Folk*, p. 52; see also Clark Wissler and D. C. Duvall, "Mythology of the Blackfoot Indians," pp. 23 ff.

[10] *Op. cit.*, p. 9.

[11] *Loc. cit.*

[12] John Maclean, "Blackfoot Mythology," p. 166.

28: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1967 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
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A comparison of Blackfoot myths--the earliest to be mentioned appears in Henry and Thompson's journal[12]—indicates a gradual deterioration in the creation myth,[14] a merging of its culture hero (perhaps originally the "Great Spirit" or the Sun)[15] with the far from admirable "trickster," whose pranks, rather than the wisdom and generosity of the Creator, receive the attention of the Blackfoot narrator today.

It seems legitimate to see in this "secondary creator"—one who is less than perfectly divine and more than ordinarily human—a projection of the Blackfoot father image. Manifestly, the Old Man stories underline conflicting attitudes that reveal a fundamental ambivalence toward the father.[16] But neither the fact that the obscene and antisocial variants are recited almost exclusively,[17] nor that "Old Man" is a synonym for immorality,[18] nor that the thought of praying to him provokes merriment,[19] would indicate whether the more frequent emphasis of the tales directly or invertedly reflects expressed opinion. For an answer we must examine, as suggested above, certain aspects and aims of Blackfoot, or more specifically Blood society, both now and in the past.[20]

In 1877, the Blood were confined to a Reservation in Alberta, Canada. In 1878, a Blood winter count reads, "This was the year the

[12] Alexander Henry and David Thompson, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest, The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and David Thompson*, edited by Elliott Coues, New York, 1897, p. 528.

[14] Clark Wissler and D. C. Duvall, "Mythology of the Blackfoot Indians," p. 9.

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 10 ff. Here Wissler suggests that a possible confusion between the Sun (*natos*) and Old Man (*napiw*) has resulted in the identification of the heroes of the two tale cycles. He notes "that the earlier writers are disposed to treat *Natos*, the Sun, as the home of the Old Man, while the later ones make each a character." Whatever the phonetic similarities in these two names, it is difficult to see this as a plausible reason for the identification of the trickster and creator. For a discussion of some of the general points involved, see David Bidney, "The Concept of Myth and the Problem of Psychocultural Evolution," *Am. Anthropologist*, LII, 1950.

[16] The Freudian school of psychoanalysis stresses that such ambivalence is generated by the oedipal situation. See particularly Géza Róheim, *Psychoanalysis and Anthropology*, New York: Int. Univ. Press, 1950.

[17] Clark Wissler and D. C. Duvall, "Mythology of the Blackfoot Indians," p. 9.

[18] *Loc. cit.*

[19] *Loc. cit.*

[20] It has not seemed necessary to document the numerous statements on institutions and history made in the following pages. For general background material, see Esther S. Goldfrank, "Changing Configurations in the Social Organization of a Blackfoot Tribe during the Reserve Period," *Monographs of the American Ethnological Society*, VIII, New York, 1945; L. M. Hanks, Jr. and Jane Richardson, "Observations on Northern Blackfoot Kinship," *Monographs of the American Ethnological Society*, IX, New York, 1945; Oscar Lewis, "The Effect of White Contact upon Blackfoot Culture," *Monographs of the American Ethnological Society*, VI, New York, 1942; Clark Wissler, "The Social Life of the Blackfoot Indians," *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*, VII, New York, 1911. The data on favoritism are taken essentially from notes made by me in 1939 on the Blood Reservation.

28: Goldfrank E-4,5 (1939) 1967 NF6 Blackfoot NF6 Blood

a grandmother, aunt, or older sister "because a stepfather might not treat him right."

To some degree the extended family structure, the close camp living, and the satisfactions found in agemates (the age grades were the strongest expression of solidarity in Blood society) cushioned the threat. But, however viewed, the emotional and even at times physical support that a child could expect from his parents or any other adult was limited indeed.

And the supernaturals were hardly more reliable—at least not those to whom one might appeal for personal aid. When a young man went out alone at night to some far-off place to seek a guardian spirit—in almost all instances, a male being, Old Man Sun, Morning-star, Rock Man or some animal—he did not feel that "strong" medicine would be his if only he followed a prescribed ritual, as was the case in the pueblos of the Southwest. Instead, the Blood youth appealed for "pity." And the supernaturals, like his nearest of kin, were unpredictable. True, if the quest succeeded, prestige would be enhanced, and after some years, material advantage also. But many a supplicant, even after repeated effort, failed to get a "vision" and the power that depended on it.

In this insecure and competitive setting, the institution of "the favorite" emerged, not as an expression of fatherly love but, as the Blackfoot word, *minipoka*, "child of plenty," makes explicit, first and essentially as a way of demonstrating wealth—a way no different from the taking of a second, third, or fourth wife, the owning of expensive pipes or bundles, the possession of a tipi made of eighteen or twenty skins.

There was only one accepted criterion for having a "favorite"—enough wealth to make continual validations in his name. Thus neither the number of the child nor its sex was a consideration, but while a girl could be a *minipoka*, more often it was a boy who was so honored. And the rich man had as many favorites as he could afford. Some said they wanted to treat their children alike, some that they wanted to show how rich they were.

The process began at birth. The favorite was placed on a weasel or otter skin—the poor man's child slept in a buckskin bag. The favorite was "initiated" to many ceremonial privileges—protective paintings, forelocks, charms, pipes, partnerships in a society like the Horns while he was still in his teens. Give-aways were held in his name, and any gift made to him was quickly repaid and usually with interest.

The favorite was fed first and with the choicest morsels. He was

Their owners[A] were called pipe stem bearers, and the position was one of great distinction. The pipe stem bearer was regarded as a medicine man, had power to quell frays and disorders that none would gainsay, took precedence even of the chiefs in treaties and councils, and their lodges were places of refuge to which the criminal of every grade could fly and be safe from harm. They were to be distinguished by a braid of hair in the center of the forehead, which hung down before the face, and they painted the face in a peculiar manner by a red cross down the nose and across the forehead and a red or green spot on each cheek. The pipe was kept in a skin case painted red, and was only taken out upon important occasions and then with great ceremony, the assembled people sitting quiet, grave and attentive, while the bearer made incense by dropping dry cedar leaves upon live coals and chanted in slow time a guttural song accompanied by peculiar movements of the arms. These pipes were all very old, apparently handed down through many generations until the occasion that had conferred upon them their peculiar virtue was lost even from tradition. A pipe that accident might have shown seemingly to possess unusual power could be dedicated as a sacred pipe by a convocation of medicine men but it was a privilege rarely exercised. There were only about half a dozen of them in each band of the Blackfeet and these were held in great veneration. Indeed, they might almost be termed the Bible of the Blackfeet and to swear upon the Sacred pipe was the most binding oath a Blackfoot could make. Perjury or disregard of the obligations of such an oath was believed to be followed by instant death. The ownership of these pipes might be transferred by barter, but their bearers were seldom willing to surrender the dignity they conferred. In value they were computed at about nine horses.

Religion

The Blackfeet believed in a Great Spirit who is all-powerful and good and has allotted to them an existence after death. The future life they think is to be passed at a point in the Saskatchewan, which they call the Sand

A. [i.e., owners of the Medicine or Sacred pipe--Analyst]

37: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1944) 1972 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

532 342 were snake-painted tipis among three of the four major divisions of the Blackfoot – the South Piegan (in Montana), and the North Piegan and Blood (in Canada), while the North Blackfoot had a Big Snake (rattlesnake) tipi. He also described one of these tipis (Wissler 1912: 220-22, 337-38).

[123] Ninety-five years after the unnamed Blackfoot artist pictured a snake-painted tipi, I saw one of them, then owned by Yellow Kidney and his wife, in the sun dance encampment near Browning. The snakes' heads were painted red, and their bodies were alternating blocks of red and green, zig-zagging around the tipi cover against a white background – much as they are pictured by the Blackfoot artist in 1847. The bottom portion of the tipi cover was also painted red with white discs, and three horizontal red bands were painted at the top of the white background of the central portion – as in the earlier artist's rendering. The upper portion (representing the night sky) was painted black, although the small discs within that area (representing stars) were green on the Yellow Kidney tipi, [178] whereas they are white in the artist's version of the snake-painted tipi. It is significant that the design of this painted tipi changed very little over a period of a century, during which it must have been repainted many times on new lodge covers of buffalo cow skin and more recently of white cloth, or canvas.

532 776 The crescent-shaped moon (in black) and circular sun (orange) appearing in the left center of the artist's work must be intended to show that Sun and Moon were major supernaturals recognized by the Blackfoot. In the tribal mythology 82 [773] [796] [178] Moon is considered to be Sun's wife, and Morning Star was their son. This relationship is repeatedly referred to in such well-known Blackfoot myths as Scar Face, and The Fixed Star (or The Woman Who Married a Star) – myths which account for the origin of the sun dance, and the symbolism of the sacred digging stick carried by the medicine woman in that most important tribal religious ceremony (Wissler and Duvall 1908: 58-68). On some of the dry-painting altars employed in Blackfoot ceremonies the moon is represented in black paint as in the artist's drawing. But on the sun dance altar it is yellow, with a narrow black center. It is always portrayed as a crescent (Wissler 1912: 254-57).

532 825 [776] This leaves only the small panel at the bottom left of the plate to be interpreted. Perhaps the artist chose to picture the pair of antelopes as a further indication of the variety of sources of supernatural power known to the Blackfoot. The antelope might, of course, have been the artist's own supernatural helper. The Blackfoot knew the antelope as the swiftest of the larger mammals on the plains. Antelope power provided a war medicine. [526] [575] Contenders in the foot races between members of the different men's societies during the summer sun dance encampments also wanted antelope power to enhance their swiftness afoot.

178 [123] [797] [144] I was privileged to live among the Blackfoot Indians in Montana for three and one-half years (1941-1944) nearly a century after Father Point first brought the teachings of Christianity to those Indians. Blackfoot life and culture had changed markedly during the intervening years. By the early 1940s less than 20%

Then I took my robe and walked out of the medicine lodge alone. I went to a lonely place and fasted for a night. I wanted to dream. But I couldn't sleep at all because of the pain. At sunrise I prayed to the sun.

Some time after that I saw a man approaching on horseback. He said, "I'm going to take you home right away." He took me up behind him on his horse and rode me slowly back to camp. My breasts were swollen and hurt. The rider's name was Red Crane. He told me of a mix-up that took place at the sun dance over horses stolen from the Gros Ventres.

When I got to my lodge, my mother gave me something to eat. She and my father told me what had happened at the sun dance gathering —a mix-up between the Mounted Police and Indians.[3] I had to stay in the lodge several days. My breasts were so swollen I could hardly move. Indian doctors used herb medicines to take the swelling away and cure my wounds.[4]

The common elements in these two accounts reveal the pattern of the self-torture experience among the Blood Indians more clearly and completely than the brief description of the ordeal previously published by McLean. This experience was initiated by a warrior through a vow to the celestial deities, sun or moon (the latter in Blackfoot belief was sun's wife), very shortly before the man exposed himself to danger. The vow was a simple, direct appeal to the deity for protection and success in the immediate, hazardous undertaking. In return for such aid the petitioner promised to make the self-torture sacrifice in the sun dance lodge of his people. On return home after the successful exploit the pledger made known his vow to his relatives. They helped him to obtain the services of one or more older men who had been through the ordeal and were qualified, therefore, to instruct and care for the young man in the ceremonial fulfillment of his vow. The public cere-

[3] In the summer of 1889, the Mounted Police sought to apprehend Calf Robe, a Blood horse thief, who sought sanctuary in the medicine lodge of his people. The Indians overpowered the police and set Calf Robe free, but there was no bloodshed (Steele, pp. 203-225). This incident serves to verify the year of Scraping White's and Heavy Head's torture.

[4] These narratives follow as closely as possible the words of the interpreter. In a few places details obtained during further questioning of the informants have been inserted.

The painted lodges of the Blackfeet were first mentioned by Alexander Henry, the fur trader, in 1809, who stated that both beasts and birds were represented in the paintings and that buffalo and bear were frequently delineated. Painted, canvas-covered lodges may still be seen in the circle camp at sun dance time. Photographs of Blackfeet lodges taken a half century ago suggest that little or no change in these figures has taken place in the last fifty years. It is possible that some of the animal figures may be represented today just as they were in Henry's time or even earlier.

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The paintings on Blackfeet lodges are no mere decorations. To the Indian who is versed in the traditions of his people, each painting is as replete with religious symbolism as is a madonna in a stained glass church window to the pious Christian. For each painted lodge there is a fascinating legend of origin relating how its first human owner obtained it. Many painted lodges, according to these legends, were given to their first Blackfeet owners in dreams or visions. Such a dream was a stirring religious experience. In it the original animal owner of the lodge appeared to the sleeper and promised to give him his own painted lodge and other sacred objects which were the sources of his supernatural power. The animal instructed the man how to paint the

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[P·24-C]

lodge and to make up the other sacred objects associated with it. When he awoke the man proceeded to follow these instructions. Thus each painted lodge is not an entity in itself but part of a complex of religious objects belonging to its owner. The owner has certain rituals to perform and taboos to recognize so long as he is in possession of these sacred objects. When he sells his painted lodge to another an elaborate transfer ritual must be performed. Painted lodges have been and still are frequently transferred from one owner to another within or among the three Blackfeet tribes Only the rightful owner is permitted to make use of the animal figures that belong to his lodge. No other man would dare copy them.

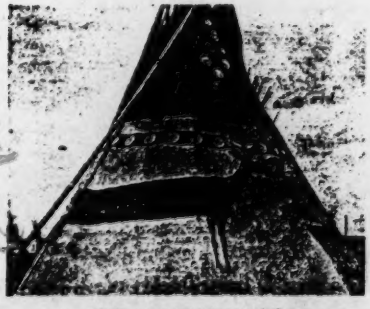
When a painted lodge cover became old and worn the paintings on it were transferred to a new one. This was generally in

[P·25-A]

mony of transferring the sacred symbols from the old to the new lodge cover was then ended. 532

The old, worn, painted cover was disposed of either by taking it to a lake, spreading it out, and weighting it with stones so that it would sink; or by spreading it out on the plains and weighting it with stones. In the first instance the old cover was given as an offering to the water spirits; in the second, it was an offering to the sun. [182] [776]

The great animal figures were generally painted on the central portion of the lodge cover, about midway of the height of the lodge. In cases of the larger mammals such as the deer, elk, and buffalo and in that of the snake lodge, a single pair of animals are painted on the cover. They represent the mythical originator and his wife. In most instances they face the lodge doorway (east), the female on the north side of the lodge and the male on the south. However, on the buffalo lodges the two huge figures appear on the east and west sides. The male buffalo is on the east facing south; the female on the west side facing north. Some of the figures have narrow elongated bodies enabling them to extend nearly halfway around the circumference of the lodge. Each of the two figures on the deer painted lodge, for example, is more than fifteen feet long and less than five feet high. Where smaller mammals are represented, 531 532 [823]



22. Deer painted lodge in 1943.

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from two to four pairs of them are depicted. The figures face east. 531 532

These animal figures generally are very stylized and decorative. Usually the body is of one solid color, either black, red or yellow. A characteristic elaborative device on most of them is the representation of the throat, heart and kidneys, which were believed to have been the sources of power of the animals depicted. [716] [825]

Many lodges decorated with animal paintings, and a number of others not so decorated, employ a similar composition of the upper and lower portions of the cover into two fields for geometric painting. At the bottom, a banded area two or more feet in height usually is painted red to represent the earth. Within this red area are one or two rows of unpainted disks representing fallen stars. A row of triangular or rounded projections upward from this band appears on a number of lodge covers, representing rounded hills or sharp mountain peaks. A banded area at the top of the cover, including the projecting ears, generally is painted black to represent the night sky. Two arrangements of unpainted disks within this area, one on each ear flap, represent the constellations of the Great Bear and the Pleiades. A Maltese cross on the west side of this top area is said to represent the morning star, or butterfly, believed to bring powerful dreams to the lodge owner. 821 531 532

In the old days only a small proportion 531 121

531 532

23. Figures on the south side of an otter painted lodge, 1943

[P-29-A]

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24. Yellow buffalo painted lodge in 1943.

of the total number of lodges in a camp were painted, and some of the painted ones employed symbols of power other than animal figures. However, from the point of view of aesthetic interest, the lodges painted with animal figures are outstanding. Their great size, and their simple, primitive, decorative quality command attention and admiration. It is in the painted animal figures on lodge covers that we find the finest expression of Blackfeet religious art. Certainly they represent the highest achievement of traditional Blackfeet painting. 531 121

QUILLWORK

The Blackfeet Indians have a beautiful legend explaining how the first porcupines were given to one of their ancestors by the powerful Thunder spirit. The same legend states that Thunder taught this person how to do quillwork. This is said to have happened a very long time ago. Certainly porcupine quillwork is one of the Blackfeet decorative arts that originated before these Indians 237 [773] [776] [825] 531

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159 under any circumstances, use red paint on your blanket." The
798 medicine articles which I purchased from the Thunder Medi-
796 cine Man included a drum, some medicine bells, and a small
[756] piece of metal.
[432] Later on [in the fall of the year 1901] I went through a
[432] ceremony with Flat Tail and Drags His Robe in order to pur-
chase a medicine pipe bundle. This bundle contained two
medicine pipes. One pipe came from Sun; the other pipe came
from Thunder.

159 During the Pipe Ceremony I used red paint on my blanket,
796 and that same night I had a dream in which two men came
787 to my house to visit me. They said that I had been warned not
763 to use red paint, and since I had ignored the warning they
784 were going to punish me by taking away my first child, my little
[776] girl. They said that they would be back to let me know when
they were going to take my daughter away from me. The men
did not tell me who they were, but I knew that they were
Thunder and Sun.

159 I went with my friend Many Guns to visit the Bloods over
484 in Canada [a customary response of the Plains Indian to an
154 emotional crisis was the paying of a visit to a distant relative
763 or close friend; this custom is adhered to by the Blackfoot In-
dian even today], and while I was in Canada word reached me
that my daughter was very ill. I returned home immediately.

159 At that time I was still living near the main fork of Cut Bank
763 Creek. When I arrived at my house, my father was holding my
[759] little girl in his lap. Earrings, who was an Indian doctor, was
attempting to treat the child, but as soon as I entered my baby
ran to me and clung to me.

159 That night I dreamed that the same two men came to me and
763 told me that very soon now they would be coming for my child.
787 In the same dream I saw a rider coming. The two men pointed
to the rider and said, "We want your daughter, and we want
that rider too." The rider was Mad Wolf. My daughter died
the next day. Mad Wolf died four days later.

159 The drum that I had received from the Thunder Medicine
778 Man had been the favorite plaything of my little girl. After
my child's death I could no longer bear even to look at the
drum, so I threw it into the creek.

The following year I attended a Medicine Lodge above Browning. The Holy Woman was Snake Woman, the wife of Morning Gun. There had been a flood that spring, and when

54: Lancaster F-3(1958-1966)1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Piegan
Montana

122 rather unsteadily back into the house he said, "I ate some onions in town for lunch. Every time I ate onions I gets sick." Then he said, in a single unpunctuated sentence: "I been sick before eating those onions and if I get sick again well whose fault is it it's mine."

Jim pluckily carried on with his translation of the Chief's stories, though, and I was thankful that he did because the results were 224 outstanding. Many so-called "experts" and "authorities" on the Black- 439 foot culture have voiced the incredibly off-base conclusion that because the Blackfoots never brought more than an occasional few beaver pelts into the trading posts, the Blackfoots were not good [825] trappers. The fact is that the small water-dwelling animals (the "Underwater Persons," of which the "Beaver Persons" were the leaders) were nearly as important in Blackfoot religious life as was the Sun. On occasion the Blackfoots would take the pelt of an Underwater Person for employment in religious ritual, but they did not trap beaver on a commercial basis, and those beaver pelts that were brought in by the Blackfoots for purposes of trade with the White Man invariably had been captured from White trappers or from the Crees or from other tribes that had no religious prohibitions with regard to trapping the Underwater Persons. It is easy to understand, then, why the Blackfoots raised so much hell with trappers, White or Indian, who invaded Blackfoot territory.

121 To my best knowledge, the Blackfoots were the only Plains In- 825 dians who placed so much credence in the existence of underwater 796 spirits, and I have my own theories on this subject. All of the 171 Algonkin Indians, including the Blackfoots, are known to have lived at one time in the Northeastern region of North America, and it is generally believed that the Blackfoots were the first of the Algonkin groups to take up residence in the Northwest. And I personally believe that the Blackfoot Underwater Persons are a religious inheritance from early Eastern Woods Indian culture. (The Cheyennes also believe in underwater spirits, and the Cheyennes, like the Blackfoots, are of Algonkin origin.) I have long observed a Norse influence upon Algonkin culture, and this observation is fortified with regard to the Blackfoots by the Blackfoot belief in not only the Underwater Persons (the water animals, the water birds, and in some instances even frogs, turtles and lizards) but in disembodied underwater spirits which appear to the Blackfoots in visions in the form of human beings *with blond hair and blue eyes.*

It is quite logical that since the Blackfoots departed from the East Coast at such an early time (they lived for some generations, it is believed, in the region of the Great Slave Lake) that early Algonkin

54: Lancaster F-3(1958-1966)1966 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Piegan
Montana

culture should have been retained by the isolated Blackfoots in a form more pure than that found among those Algonkins who remained in the East and were thus subjected to the cultural influence of other Indian groups and of course to that of the various European groups which colonized in that area. I am especially intrigued by the fact that even today some of the older Blackfoots, when crossing a body of water, will offer gifts to the spirits upon whose domain they are trespassing. Usually the offering to the Underwater Spirits is in the form of tobacco—a sack of Bull Durham or a cigarette—but this gesture certainly evokes thoughts of the ancient mariners (not only the Norsemen but the Ancient Greeks) pouring libations upon the waters in petition for a safe voyage. Even today, the Underwater Spirits are very real to those Blackfoots who cling to the old beliefs, and although some of the younger Blackfoots do not hesitate to trap the Beaver Persons and the Otter Persons, the old-timers still prefer to purchase their ceremonial water-animal skins from the barbaric Crees.

There is certainly a great deal of factual information with which to link Blackfoot culture to that of the ancient Norsemen (e.g., the Blackfoot sweat lodge is identical in appearance and function to the rustic Scandinavian sauna bath, and the Blackfoots switch themselves with a buffalo tail exactly as the Scandinavians smack themselves with birch branches), but our best clues as to the origin of the Blackfoots exist probably in Blackfoot legend. Tonight, after we had discussed the Underwater Persons, the Chief told me a richly interesting history of an event which had taken place "a long time ago" (when the Chief says a long time ago he means a *really* long time ago) when all the Blackfoots lived "far to the north." This legend may imply, among other things, the first breaking away of the Piegans from the main body of Blackfoots. The hero of the story is a man called Round Scabby Robe, who received his power from the Underwater Persons, the Beaver Persons. The word "Piegan"—which most writers transcribe from the Blackfoot as "Pekuni" or "Pecunnie" but which is correctly pronounced either [pík̆ni] or [pík̆ńi] according to linguistic environment—means Scabby Robe.

WHY THE PIEGANS KILL THE SNAKE PERSONS

A long, long time ago, when all the Blackfoots lived far up in the North, they did not kill the Snake Persons [the Shoshoni Indians] or make war on them. Each year when the waters became warm [probably in July or early August], the chiefs